

Jordan Times

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Eritrea to withdraw from Red Sea island

SANAA (AFP) — Eritrea has decided to withdraw from the disputed Red Sea island of Lesser Hanish, also claimed by Yemen. French mediator Francis Gutzmann was quoted by the official Yemeni agency SABA as saying on Sunday. The French diplomat told Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh that the "Eritrean government had officially informed him of its decision to withdraw troops from the Yemeni island of Lesser Hanish," SABA said. The conflict over the Hanish archipelago, at the southern end of the Red Sea, broke out in December when Asmara took the island of Greater Hanish. After French mediation, the two countries agreed May 21 to submit their dispute to an international tribunal of arbitration.

Arab leaders contact King Hussein

AMMAN (J.T.) — His Majesty King Hussein Sunday received phone calls from Saudi Crown Prince Abdullah, Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh, Qatari Emir Sheikh Hamad Ben Khalifa Al Thani, Palestinian President Yasser Arafat and Bahraini Crown Prince Sheikh Hamad Ben Issa Al Khalifa, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, said. It said the discussions between the King and the Arab leaders dealt with bilateral relations and means to enhance them. It did not give details, but it was believed that the Arab leaders contacted the King also to inquire about the situation in southern Jordan.

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King, citing premeditated attempts to cause riots, says probe is under way to know who is responsible

Relative calm prevails in Karak; town's residents remain on edge

HM believes external elements, perhaps the same as those behind 1989 events, exploited people's sentiments in cheap manner and tried to damage Jordan's image

From Ayman Safadi in Karak

RELATIVE CALM prevailed in Karak on Sunday after two days of rioting against increases in the prices of bread as the southern city remained under a curfew and the army patrolled the streets and maintained vigil from rooftops.

Phone lines with Amman were cut off from early Sunday. The curfew was lifted for two hours in the afternoon to allow people to buy essentials. However, the curfew, which was first imposed on Saturday, did not appear to be strongly enforced as people could still be seen in the streets after the two-hour period.

Residents said up to 130 people were arrested. In Amman, Information Minister Marwan Muasher con-

firmed that arrests were made but did not give any numbers. The minister stressed that only those directly involved in damaging property and looting were arrested (see separate story).

Arrests continued Sunday.

Security forces entered the office of Karak Mayor Ahmad Mahaddin while this reporter was interviewing members of the city's municipal council. The security officers checked the IDs of those present against a list of names they had.

Television coverage of the situation in Karak was banned; television crew were called in to the city's police station and told to leave town.

Mayor Mahaddin, a member of the Islamic Action

Front (IAF) party, and several residents said the calm in the city could be broken again if the government did not roll back its decision to increase the prices of bread.

They also said the town residents were enraged by the tough response of the authorities to their protests and insisted that the government of Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti should resign.

"This is a calm enforced by tanks, but the angry feelings remain," a young man told the Jordan Times as he lolled a few metres from an army personnel carrier.

Dr. Mahaddin blamed Karak Governor Badreddine Al Wadian and security forces for the violence. He said the behaviour of the security forces was very rough as they sought to disperse a group of 200 to 300

demonstrators who took to the streets after Friday noon prayers at the city's main Omari Mosque.

The mayor described the demonstration against the increase in bread prices as "a peaceful march" that turned violent when security forces rough-handled the protesters.

In an interview with Jordan Television, the King said: "Thank God the situation is calm. The Jordanian citizens are a source of pride to me because through their awareness peace is now restored."

"Yesterday and today I have received numerous telephone calls from mayors, tribal leaders and heads of various organisations in the different parts of Jordan, all condemning the recent events and

attempts to distort the image of this country and to damage Jordanians' properties," the King said.

The King said all these callers reaffirmed allegiance to his policies and expressed readiness to "stand firm in the face of all crises."

In reply to a question, the King said: "I believe there were external parties behind these events, but investigations are bound to reveal the details about those responsible. I am surprised to see these events taking place in an atmosphere of dialogue and democracy. Some people have tried to exploit the sentiments of the people in a cheap manner at a time

when the local residents were unaware of what has been going on. These elements have tried to harm our achievements, and to create a real danger to Jordan's democracy and distort Jordan's image and reputation before the world."

The King stressed that there were no casualties despite the fact that the security services and people were fired upon.

He said that the events brought back to him memories of the 1989 riots in the south. Perhaps the same elements behind the 1989 events were also responsible for these riots in the past two days' events, he said.



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"The situation is different

(Continued on page 7)

Opposition blames government for riots, insists on executive authority's resignation

AMMAN (J.T.) — Opposition parties and professional associations Sunday blamed the government for the eruption and escalation of the riots in the south and insisted on the government's resignation as an inevitable step to calm the situation in the Kingdom.

In a press conference held at the Islamic Action Front party headquarters at Abdali, a coalition of eleven political parties, twelve professional associations, unions and public figures called for the downfall of the government of Abdul Karim

Kabariti for what it described as disregarding the will of the people and their representatives.

"What happened in Karak was an inevitable outcome of the government's policies," said Milhem Tal, the coalition's spokesperson.

"What is worse is that the government and security forces did not allow our people to demonstrate peacefully. In fact, they have turned down the request of some Jordanians to stage a peaceful march that could have ended peacefully."

"It is very normal that, in this tense atmosphere charged with angry popular reaction that resulted from the government's disregard for the feelings of the people and their representatives, such an expression of sentiments spread to other areas in the south," he said.

Al Dastour daily reported Sunday that the Karak municipal council decided to send two cables to His Majesty King Hussein, the first one to inform him of the "misleading and inaccurate information" he is receiving about the events

there" and the second to protest about the threats Karak Deputy Nazih Ammarin claimed he received from the prime minister.

The coalition blamed all riots and sabotage that started in Karak and spread to Ma'an and Tafleh and finally reached an area in the capital Saturday night on the shoulders of the government only and rejecting outright the involvement of foreign parties in fomenting the unrest.

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Muasher: Only those directly involved in riots are arrested

By Yasser Abu Hatabah Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Information Minister Marwan Muasher said Sunday the situation in riot-hit southern Jordan had returned to normal and that the authorities were arresting those suspected of involvement in the riots and destruction of public property.

In a statement to the press following Sunday's Cabinet session, which was chaired by Prime Minister Abdul Karim Al Kabariti, Dr. Muasher said calm prevails throughout the Kingdom.

Dr. Muasher said the authorities had detained

those involved in the destruction of public property, robbery and looting rather than those who participated in demonstrations.

Dr. Muasher said the government would not be lenient with them and will refer them to the courts for trial.

The minister dismissed suggestions that the arrests were motivated by political considerations, but said that some of those arrested belong to certain party organisations which might have been involved in the unrest.

"Some parties have exploited the situation to serve certain purposes," he

said. "Very few slogans raised during the events dealt with the increase in bread prices, he said, and most of the slogans raised were political and targeted the country and its institutions."

Dr. Muasher stressed that nobody was killed in the riots but minor injuries were reported. He added that the public security forces had received strict instructions not to use live ammunition.

Dr. Muasher said the curfew clamped on Karak was lifted for two hours on Sunday and that it will be lifted completely soon.

On disturbances in Hay

Tafaileh in Jofeh, near Amman, Dr. Muasher said a group of minors had burnt garbage containers, but that the situation was dealt with and calm was restored.

The Council of Ministers on Sunday asked Minister of Supply Munir Sober to reconsider the increase in prices of dairy products, Dr. Muasher said.

The Ministry of Supply "will study the prices of dairy products and draw up another list of prices," he added: "There may be some violations, but the ministry of supply will put an end to violations."

Re-evaluation process to start when law and order re-established

Political restructuring programme on the cards as the country moves beyond stage of riots

By Nermeen Murad

AMMAN — His Majesty King Hussein will order a re-evaluation process of the whole political experience since 1989 once law, order and normal life are restored to the south and to the rest of the country, informed sources said yesterday.

The King is now considering options to put in motion this kind of process, the sources said, adding that the end result may be a political restructuring programme, depending on what the re-evaluation process reveals.

"His Majesty is keen to know where we went right or wrong in the democratisation process of the past seven years," one source said. "From then on, the positive aspects will be emphasised at the expense of the negative practices, with the ultimate aim being progress on the democratic front, greater stability and working harder towards achieving consensus politics."

The sources did not define the kind of framework that will encompass the re-evaluation effort, but one of them pointed out that it could be close to the model employed to draw up the National Charter in 1991 and would necessarily involve a dialogue between the government, Parliament and political parties.

But before this is done, the sources agreed, the King and government have a top priority and that is to re-establish law and order in the wake of the violent riots which broke out in

the towns of Karak, Tafleh, Maan and other areas.

"Now it is obvious that there is a security issue, which is the top priority for now," one source told the Jordan Times. "The next step will be to re-assess Jordan's democratic experiment as it stands today and re-establish the rules that will guide it into the future, in light of what has happened," the source added.

"The whole issue of lifting the subsidies — the intensive debate on it, the way it was handled in Parliament and the press — will figure highly in the study process, especially in light of the riots that ensued," another source said. "But while there will be no going back to the status quo ante, I think, following the completion of the re-evaluation process, it is highly unlikely that the regime will go back on democracy either."

The regime will not consider a termination of the democratic march, a former senior official said. There might be areas where the rule of law would be tightened and certain restrictions on political expression imposed, but democracy will survive the test, with or without the re-evaluation process, if only for logical reasons, the official and other sources said.

They believe that several factors will figure in the King's thinking when re-evaluating the democratisation process especially since any regression will be harmful politically as it would be undertaken immediately after riots that are reminiscent of

the 1989 events.

Among these factors will be the several advantages that the country's democratisation has brought with it and which have contributed to maintaining stability, political liberalisation and economic progress.

"The reintroduction of democracy is what saved the day after the 1989 riots," one former senior official told

analyst told the Jordan Times. "Mr. Kabariti's premiership itself is a product of the democratisation process, and the majority of Cabinet members are elected representatives of the people. It is not easy for them or any other government to overlook the value of democracy for the future of Jordan."

"On the other hand, the govern-

ment, any government, must realise that despite the obvious delays and hassle involved in trying to win parliamentary approval for its policies, the democratic process itself becomes ultimately capable of giving legitimacy to those policies," the analyst said.

"Democracy gives a policymaker more courage to bring issues up, and profound change can happen if you have parliamentary approval," former Minister of Finance Basel Jaradneh told the Jordan Times yesterday.

"If you try to employ proper channels in your favour, by dealing with Parliament and you have a credible argument, then you can convince the people's representatives of what you want," said Mr. Jaradneh, who has been widely credited as the architect of the Kingdom's economic recovery programme after the 1988-1989 crisis.

Mr. Jaradneh and other sources pointed out that the signing of the peace treaty with Israel, the econom-

ic restructuring programme, the value added tax as well as the decision to distance the Kingdom from the Iraqi regime are only a few examples of decisions that have been accepted peacefully because governments at the time were able to gain support from Parliament for these steps, albeit sometimes grudgingly.

Another element which will figure highly in any consideration by the regime of reversing the democratic experiment in the Kingdom, all sources and analysts agree is that the change that accompanied the seven years of democratic and political development has become too institutionalised and too ingrained in people's minds to be retracted.

Democracy cannot be done away with because it has been accompanied by concrete steps towards institutionalisation and becoming a permanent feature of civil society, the sources said. "Laws have been changed and updated to keep pace with the freedom and openness that have accompanied the democratisation process, not least of which is the abolition of the defence and martial laws and the introduction of such important legislation as the political parties and press and publication laws," one of them explained. Jordan, which has also committed itself to pursuing democratic reforms and presented itself worldwide as a model of tolerance and respect for human rights "cannot now go against the current in the world which is moving towards democracy as part of a glob-

al system," he added.

In fact, Mr. Jaradneh pointed out that Jordan's attractiveness to foreign investors has been due largely to its democratic reforms simultaneously with the economic adjustment programme which has been put in effect since the reintroduction of democracy in 1989.

"These are twin elements," Mr. Jaradneh said. "The democratic process has certainly been useful in improving the business climate without which it is doubtful that we would have been able to attract foreign investors."

The King and the government, according to the sources, are aware of all the benefits of democracy. Yet, they are also aware that democracy has often been threatened by the absence of an effective and unbiased application of the law. Not only in this area do we need reform, a government source said, pointing to attempts by parliamentarians, and official acquiescence, to relax the application of the law when it is done to their advantage. "There are other spheres as well in which the government would have to curb excesses, that might otherwise be mistaken for freedoms such as sensationalism and inaccurate stories in the tabloid newspapers and inciteful sermons in mosques."

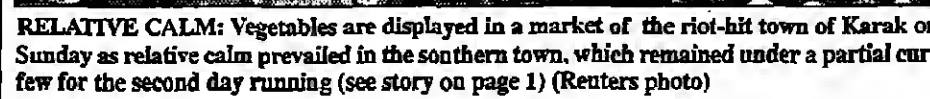
The government, in its statement Saturday, underlined that democracy should flourish and develop "under

(Continued on page 6)

Rival Kurds locked in heavy fighting — U.N.

June and called on Israel to bolster the Kingdom by "demonstrating to the Jordanians that peace brings rewards."

"We must help our friends," the daily *Yediot Aharonot* said, proposing that Israel make economic goodwill gestures.



Mr. Habib called for three-way cooperation among Iran, Turkey and Syria to launch an Islamic common market, which he said could play "an effective role in establishing

The authorities also said that a 55-year-old Shiite Muslim woman died last month of a heart attack.

Delays in decision-making about purchases of new weapons and maintenance contracts have

resulted in spares and supply problems that have sometimes grounded dozens of aircraft and left newly purchased army vehicles lying idle, analysts say.

Parliament Speaker Ahmad Al Saadoun, giving one example, said last month that 28 out of the

country's 40 top-of-the-line U.S. F-18 warplanes were grounded due to technical faults. The military said F-18 maintenance problems were exacerbated

CALENDAR

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ARRIVALS
Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights
 08:15Sanaa (RJ)
 09:00Damascus (RJ)
 09:30Jeddah (RJ)

09:30	.....	Jeddah (RJ)
10:10	.....	Dubai, Abu Dhabi (RJ)
10:20	.....	Beirut (RJ)
10:30	.....	New Delhi (RJ)
15:00	.....	London (RJ)
17:30	.....	Cairo (RJ)

17:20Cairo (RJ)
17:20 Fukuoka, Bangkok (add) (RJ)
17:45New York, Amsterdam (RJ)
18:25Rhodes (add) (RJ)
19:00Bangkok (RJ)
20:25Cairo, Fukuoka (RJ)

Other Flights

11:45Khartoum (SD)
13:40 Shariqah, Bahrain (GF)
14:30Kiev (6U)
15:00..... Vienna (OS)
18:30Athens, Istanbul (07)

20:35 Cairo (MS)
20:55Paris, Damascus (AF)
21:10Beirut (ME)

250	Amsterdam (KL)	Water melon	190/140
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al and global economy

<p>Dr. Ghazi Tammeh.....250080 Al Quds pharmacy.....(—) AARQA: Dr. Akram Haddad985550 Khalifeh pharmacy985417 EMERGENCIES Food Control Centre.....637111</p>	<h2>HOSPITAL</h2>	<p>AQABA: Princess Haya Hospital (03)314111</p> <p>AMMAN: Hussein Medical Centre313813/32 Khalidi Maternity.....642281/6 Aklah Maternity.....642441/2 Jabal Amman Maternity642362</p>	<p>(02)241100 Quiet Flights 11:45Khartoum (S) 13:40 Sharigah, Bahrain (G) 14:30Kiev (6) 15:00.....Vienna (O) 18:30Athens, Istanbul (C) 20:35Cairo (M) 20:55Paris, Damascus (A) 21:10Beirut (M)</p>
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1:25 Doua (QI)	Potato	300/200
3:00 Cairo (MS)	String Bean	780/500
3:55 Tel Aviv (LY)	Sweet melon	300/160
2:30 Damascus, Paris (AF)	Tomato	120/70
 Amsterdam (KL)	Water melon	190/140

12:30	Amsterdam (KL)	Water melon	120/140
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Monday, August 19, 1996
Kurds locked
fighting — U

Home News

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Life was back to normal at Hay Al Tafayleh on Sunday, where police battled rioters in the heart of the capital late Saturday during protests over a government decision to double bread prices. Residents in the Hay al Tafayleh area, on one of seven hills forming Amman, fired gunshots at police who threw tear gas to try to disperse them (Reuters photo)

Amman's Hay Al Tafayleh back to normalcy after evening protest

By Abdullah Hasanat

AMMAN — The winding and narrow streets of the Tafayleh neighbourhood in east Amman were deserted at 2:30 a.m. yesterday, save for a few Egyptian workers who had finished their work in downtown and were climbing, on foot, up the slope of Jabal Al Ashrafieh and Al Taj to get back home at that hour.

One service taxi driver, when asked for directions to a trouble spot where, according to news agencies reports, a clash had taken place, earlier, between protesters and police, advised the questioner, and a friend accompanying him to quit the search and go home safely.

The friend, who accompanied this reporter thought the driver was a plainclothes policeman monitoring the streets for any potential trouble.

We nearly did go home, having failed to find any trace of trouble in "Hay

Tafayleh," except that at the end of the road we were driving on we caught a glimpse of three police vehicles, with their warning lights on, and a dozen policemen standing on a road crossing.

My friend, who at that time was not carrying his driving licence, feared trouble. Upon arriving at the crossing point, driving at minimum speed, he took to the left into the only road that was not blocked by police.

We looked at the police officers and they looked at us, without making as much as a sign, and we rolled again down hill. It was on this road that we detected signs of an earlier clash. The street was strewn with stones, and about 300 metres away from where the police stood three garbage containers blocked the road.

We made our way past the containers, and at about another 200 metres we saw several young men stand-

ing on the pavement on front of a tall building.

At first they thought we were policemen in plainclothes, but when I showed them my press card they started talking. Soon more young people joined, about 20 in all.

According to these young men, the clash with police occurred at about 9 p.m. on Saturday evening when the officers sought to disperse what they said was a peaceful march.

Asked what they were protesting against, the men, who actually hail from the southern town of Tafayleh (hence the "Hay Tafayleh" name for the neighbourhood), said they were only protesting the increase in bread prices as they were employed but all were underpaid.

"What do you think I do?" One of them asked. "I work as a messenger and I only make 80 dinars a month; I only eat bread and tea." Another youngster said: "All we have left is

the loaf of bread, we will follow it where ever it goes, even to the Dead Sea."

The crossing in front of us was littered with pieces of cloth and onions with which the protesters covered their faces and noses in order to protect themselves from tear gas.

"Police threw hundreds of gas canisters at us," one claimed. But "tomorrow we will have it our way."

Driving down hill again, we saw a TV crew with their equipment in a van that was about to navigate the streets of the Tafayleh neighbourhood looking for the same story.

We went home wondering whether those young men would have enough sleep that night before they headed back to their jobs on the following morning.

I could not find an answer yesterday as I searched the news but found no reports on any renewed riots or demonstrations in "Hay Tafayleh."

Minister issues new instructions to banks on payment of cash subsidies

AMMAN (Petra) — Finance Minister Marwan Awad Sunday issued additional regulations to banks for persons wishing to receive the government cash subsidy compensating them for recent increase in bread prices.

The designated banks have been instructed to use family registration books to determine the actual number of persons who are entitled to a government-sponsored cash subsidy for bread.

The regulations, which strive to address financial inequities which emerged during the cash subsidy payment process, have proffered new definitions

as to exactly who may be considered a beneficiary of the cash subsidy.

Under the additional regulations, if a betrothed man has died then his widow will be responsible for collection of the allotted amount.

If both parents have passed away then it is the eldest son who must collect the compensation.

If the designated primary caretaker is permanently disabled and therefore unable to collect the sum from the designated banks and post offices then a second beneficiary may collect it provided that he or she proves that he or she is the reasonable candidate for

second beneficiary in accordance with the family registration book.

The new regulations determine that in the case of a primary caretaker serving a prison term, or residing in any such rehabilitation centre, the cash subsidy will be paid to his family members in accordance with the family registration book on condition that an official document authorised by such a rehabilitation centre is duly issued.

The new regulations were issued to facilitate the payment of cash subsidies and to assure a tranquil, orderly process.

Mr. Awad met with the

chairman of the board of directors of the Association of Banks in Jordan and the two debated means of accelerating payment of the cash subsidy to Jordanian nationals.

He also visited certain authorised paying banks to inspect the procedures followed in collecting the cash subsidy.

Banks authorised to portion the subsidy are as follows: The Arab Bank; the Islamic Bank; the Cairo-Amman Bank; the National Bank; the Bank of Jordan; the Jordan-Gulf Bank; and the Jordan-Kuwait Bank.

Global Development Forum opens Amman office, first in Arab World

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The Washington-based Global Development Forum (GDF), a non-governmental, non-profit organisation, Sunday established a regional office in Jordan to implement economic and social programmes in the Kingdom with the intention of furthering their organisation in the Arab World at a later date, according to Honorary President in Amman Basam Saket.

Dr. Saket further explained that the GDF, which is funded by industrialised nations, including the U.S., Europe and Japan as well as other

international organisations, dedicates itself to assisting underdeveloped communities through launching modest projects directed towards income building.

The aim of this forum, he told the Jordan Times, is to help underdeveloped communities confront poverty and unemployment while ensuring environmental preservation.

Dr. Saket, who signed the formal documents launching the GDF's Jordan project with the Minister of Social Development Hamad Abu Jamus, said that the GDF regional office, the only one of its kind in the Arab World, also anticipates social and economic development

endeavours in Palestine, Lebanon, Iraq, Egypt, Sudan, Yemen, Somalia, Ethiopia, Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco and Mauritania.

He elucidated that the regional office will be run by cadres provided by industrialised nations and will enrol local staff to assist the office in training and technical assistance so that they may be fully prepared to implement said development projects.

"As the office has presently received official licence to operate in the region, the GDF's head office is expected to bring in personnel to research and initiate development programmes which might benefit needy communities and

improved sectors," said Dr. Saket.

An agreement, co-signed by Mr. Abu Jamus, provides for the regional office to plan, design, finance and execute beneficial programmes and explore means to both protect the environment and increase public awareness as to the hazards of environmental pollution.

The office staff, maintained Dr. Saket, will be equally involved in field work such as training local communities on income-generating skills and initiating projects to help them achieve self-reliance and increase productivity.

Ministers visit Mafrak

MAFRAQ (Petra) — Various Cabinet ministers Sunday visited the Mafrak governorate to inspect citizen services offered there. The Minister of Public Works and Housing Abdul Hadi Majali spoke to Mafrak citizens and voiced his confidence in their ability to differentiate between right and wrong, focusing on the riotous incidents in the south of Jordan.

Mr. Majali quoted His Majesty King Hussein as describing Jordan's current position as "critical", and further added "either we pass with success" or "we remain in a tunnel leading nowhere". Minister of Supply Munir Sober discussed a recent Cabinet decision to allow for importation and exportation of sheep.

Minister of Post and Telecommunications Jamal Sarrafah described the new Mafrak telecommunications project as "a gift from His Majesty to the Mafrak people." Minister of Energy and Mineral Resources Hashem Dabbas spoke of former governments which succeeded in offering electricity to every region and asserted that 98 per cent of Jordanians now enjoy electric power.

FJLU denounces disturbances in south, describes them as uncivilised

AMMAN (Petra) — The Federation of Jordanian Labour Unions (FJLU) Sunday expressed deep regret over disturbances and rioting in southern Jordan over the past two days, describing the violent protests as uncivilised actions and calling for concerted efforts to protect the country's patrimony.

A statement signed by secretary-general to the federation Khaled Shreim voiced regret over the incidents "which occurred at a time when the Kingdom is in dire need of mobilising its efforts toward enhancing the march of progress."

"These incidents contravene the spirit of democracy which aims at helping Jordan attain a bright and prosperous future," it added.

"These tragic events can

only open the door for the enemies of the nation to accomplish an evil intent and cause harm to the Jordanian people and their achievements (which were) accomplished through hard struggle under His Majesty King Hussein's rule."

"We take pride in the King's leadership and his wisdom in the handling of this crisis and we fully support his moves to thwart acts intent on sedition, we support the government's economic restructuring programmes and call on Jordanian citizens to exercise self-restraint and ignore all calls to violence," concluded the statement.

Meanwhile notable personalities in the Maan and Tafayleh governorates, where the riots burst, have expressed their anger over the recent unrest.

In meetings held with local governors they condemned the disturbances and communicated their readiness to cooperate with the proper authorities to apprehend those responsible for the outbreak.

Prominent public figures in the governorates of Zarqa and Mafrak also denounced the frenzied demonstrations during their assemblies with local governors.

His Majesty King Hussein received cables of support from various organisations, unions, tribal chiefs, and representatives of Palestinian refugee camps who deplored the boisterous incidents and declared support for a governmental strategy to control the situation.

Jerusalem Societies in Amman warn of Israeli plans to Judaize Holy City

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Jerusalem Societies in Amman Sunday issued an alert to the continuing illegal Israeli measures in Arab Jerusalem designed to Judaize the city and eliminate its Arab and Islamic character.

The statement, signed by the society's Secretary General Suhli Ghosheh, warned of Israeli plans for dismantling a section of the walls surrounding the Old City under a pretext of restoration work.

"This move on the part of the Israeli authorities forms part of a total conspiracy against the Arab sector of Jerusalem. It is aimed at

diminishing its Arab and Islamic heritage and constitutes another step toward solidifying the Jewish state's claim over the city as its personal capital," avowed the statement which emerged from a joint assembly consisting of 15 member societies.

"The Jerusalem societies in Jordan and abroad strongly condemn all Israeli acts aimed at Judaizing the Arab and holy parts of Jerusalem and call on the world community to recognise the danger inherent in Israel's ambition to alter the character of the city," it continued.

It further stated that the

demolition of parts of the anoque wall, which is centuries old, is a prelude to substituting parts of the original masonry with stones so as to distort historical data and introduce false evidence that might suggest that the Arab craft evidenced a Jewish influence.

The walls of the city were built by Muslim caliphs in the 11th century A. D. and encompass Christian and Muslim Shrines including the Dome of the Rock and the Al Aqsa Mosque.

The statement called on the Muslims and Arabs to take practical action rather than issuing mere state-

ments of condemnation, that they might deter Israeli activity and ensure its compliance to U.N. Security Council resolutions which have requested that Israel refrain from modifying the status of Jerusalem.

It has likewise appealed on the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) to halt Israeli procedures aimed at changing historical facts and tampering with global cultural and religious heritage.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Bahraini official concludes visit

AMMAN (Petra) — Bahraini Under-Secretary of Defence Sheikh Suleiman Ben Hamad Ben Issa Al Khalifa left Amman Sunday at the end of a several-day visit to Jordan during which he met with Prime Minister and Defence Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Field Marshal Abdul Hafez Mirai. Sheikh Suleiman was seen off at the airport by His Royal Highness Prince Abdullah Ben Al Hussein. Also bidding farewell to the Bahraini official were the chief of staff of the land forces, the assistant chief of staff for human resources and the Bahraini ambassador.

Kabariti reviews relations with Yemen, Bahrain

AMMAN (Petra) — Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti Sunday reviewed relations with Yemen and Bahrain in two telephone calls he received from his Yemeni and Bahraini counterparts, Abdul Aziz Abdul Ghani and Khalifa Ben Salman Al Khalifa.

Inter-Arab free trade agreement evolves

AMMAN (Petra) — Minister of Industry and Trade Ali Abul Ragheb conferred with Secretary General of the Council of Arab Economic Unity (CAEU) Hassan Ibrahim on the council's activities and the future of this committee promoting unity of Arab interests. Mr. Abul Ragheb praised the council's efforts to conclude an inter-Arab free trade agreement which aims to keep abreast of regional and global economic developments of potential benefit to the Arab commu-

nity.

35,915 passports issued last month

AMMAN (Petra) — The Civil Registration and Passport Department issued 35,915 new passports, 7,324 family registration books, and 20,940 identity cards last month, according to department sources.

Algeria, Jordan to collaborate in health fields

AMMAN (Petra) — Health Minister Aref Bataineh Sunday discussed relations in the health field with the Algerian ambassador to Jordan, Al Hashemi Qadouri, and stressed urgency in cooperation in the medical and pharmaceutical fields. The two officials also discussed an agreement reached between Mr. Bataineh and his Algerian counterpart during the latter's visit to Jordan last month, under which Jordan agreed to send a team of cardiologists to Algeria to perform open heart surgeries in Algerian hospitals.

Canadian, German ambassadors end term

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Jordanian Businessmen Association (JBA) have organised an engagement for Tuesday August 20 to bid farewell to the Canadian and German ambassadors to Jordan, Michel de Salaberry and Heinrich Reinert, on the occasion of the end of their tour of duty. The meeting will be followed by a dinner in honour of the two who had worked towards advancement of economic relations.

SLIDE LECTURE

* "Ancient Water Systems" by Mr. Ahmad Shreideh at the Friends of Archaeology Center (Tel 696-682) at 6:30 p.m.

EXHIBITIONS

* "A Summer Souvenir" exhibition by Jordan River Designs, Adil Centre.

WHAT'S GOING ON

Shmeisani (Tel. 813081/2), until Aug. 25.

* Wrought-iron exhibition by Safim Bandak at Kan Zaman, until Aug. 21.

* Abstract (plastic) art by Jordanian artist Abeer Bawab at the Royal Cul-

tural Centre, until Aug. 22.

* Abstract (plastic) art by Hana Barni entitled "Between Past and Present" at the Royal Cultural Centre, until Aug. 20.

* Abstract (plastic) art by Hussein Da'seh and Nader Samarah at the Orfati Art Gallery, Umm Utheina (Tel. 826932), until Aug. 20.

Moscow-infighting could dull Chechenya truce hopes

MOSCOW (Agencies) — A fragile ceasefire newly agreed by Russian and rebel commanders in Chechenya could be overshadowed by political infighting between Moscow's two top security officials.

President Boris Yeltsin's security supremo Alexander Lebed has accused Interior Minister Anatoly Kulikov of mishandling the Chechenya conflict and demanded his dismissal.

Lebed, a general who has taken on the role of peace-maker, held talks with those behind the current truce during two visits to Chechenya last week in his new capacity as Yeltsin's representative in the independence-seeking region.

He said Russia could not afford a Chechenya war. "A beggar-country cannot wage a war. It cannot afford it. That is why this war must be stopped," he said in an extract from a television

interview to be broadcast on Sunday.

Mr. Kulikov, whom Kremlin sources said had been confirmed in his post by Mr. Yeltsin, earlier responded somewhat condescendingly to Gen. Lebed's demand, suggesting he did not understand the issues.

"Perhaps Alexander Lebed, a man who has only recently begun to dip into Caucasian problems, does not yet have a full understanding of everything," he said on Russian Television.

The row between the two men followed the bloodiest fighting in Chechenya for more than a year after the rebels swept into the capital Grozny on Sept. 6, capturing key buildings and humiliating the Russian military.

Mr. Kulikov's Interior Ministry troops have been fighting — and dying — alongside regular army sol-

diers in the Caucasus region.

Gen. Lebed made his name commanding an army force in the mainly Slav Dnestr region of Moldova, where he helped to broker an end to fighting between Moldovan militia and Dnestr separatists.

His visits to Chechenya impressed the Chechen separatists. Rebel leader Zelimkhan Yandarbiyev said talks with him had been "hopeful and constructive," adding: "Lebed has every chance of bringing peace to Chechenya and to the whole north Caucasus."

The ceasefire formally approved Saturday was the latest in a series of deals agreed and violated since Russia sent in troops in December 1994 to crush Chechenya's independence bid.

"We consider these measures the first serious step on the road to ending the

bloodshed," said acting Russian Commander Konstantin Pulikovskiy after his talks with rebel Chief-of-Staff Aslan Maskhadov. The two men were due to meet again Sunday.

But both sides have already accused each other of violating the truce, which the commanders had said was supposed to take effect from Saturday morning.

Rebel spokesman Movladi Udugov said Russian troops attacked the rebels on three occasions and an Interior Ministry source told Interfax News Agency that rebels used gas in an attack on Russian troops.

As with many statements about fighting and casualties during the conflict, neither report could be confirmed.

Meanwhile, Russian forces Sunday accused Chechen separatists of using a truce in the breakaway republic to replenish their supplies and jockey for a stronger negotiating position.

The command of the Interior Ministry forces accused the rebels of using a truce that took effect last Wednesday to replenish their supplies of weapons, munitions and food and to restore their radio communications. Interfax News Agency reported.

"The separatists' leadership is trying to regain the initiative to dictate their conditions during negotiations," the command's press service said.

The Interior Ministry forces statement came as Russian and Chechen negotiators were meeting in Chechenya to finalise the terms of a formal ceasefire and set up a ceasefire-monitoring commission.



A Chechen man lies in a hospital bed in the town of Urus-Martan Sunday after losing his leg when he stepped on a mine. The Chechen capital of Grozny was mostly quiet overnight with only sporadic shooting as a ceasefire between separatist rebels and Russian forces took hold Sunday (Reuters photo).

Russia, U.S. hold war games near China, N. Korea

TOKYO (R) — Russian and U.S. troops staged war games in the Russian Far East near the border with North Korea and China last week in a move linked to a possible crisis in North Korea, the daily Tokyo Shimbun reported Sunday.

It was the third joint exercise between navies and Marines of the two countries in the Pacific after a similar one held in the Russian Far East in 1994 and in Hawaii last year, Tokyo Shimbun said in a report from Vladivostok.

For the first time this year, a 39,967-tonne U.S. Tarawa-class amphibious assault ship took part in the one-day exercise on Aug. 14 held south of Vladivostok, together with 400 Marines from both countries, the daily said.

U.S. Navy officials in Japan were not available for comment Sunday.

The area is located only 30 kilometres from the Chinese border and 60 kilometres from North Korea, the daily said.

"We have concerns over

the situation in North Korea," an unnamed senior official of the U.S. 7th Fleet told the Tokyo Shimbun. "The amphibious exercise in Russia will be a valuable experience."

Tokyo Shimbun said the games were held in lieu of the "Team Spirit" exercises held annually by the United States and South Korea but suspended since 1994.

The United States formally wanted to base the latest games on scenarios including the freeing of hostages and border incidents, but

Russia rejected such plans.

Instead, the manoeuvre was formally called an exercise to practice joint natural disaster relief operations, Tokyo Shimbun said.

North Korea, suffering from an acute food shortage after floods ravaged much of the isolated nation last year, shares a heavily fortified border with South Korea.

The two remain technically at war since their 1950-53 conflict ended in a truce agreement and not a peace treaty.



U.S. Marines from the 7th Fleet wash their boots in the Sea of Japan Sunday near Vladivostok, during a joint Russian-American military exercise. The peacekeeping training exercise "Cooperation On The Sea-96" is the third stage of the programme. The first one was in 1994 off Russia's Far Eastern coast and a second one was held in 1995 near Hawaii (Reuters photo).

Nicaragua finds more bodies in secret cemeteries

MANAGUA, Nicaragua (R) — Officials have found 150 bodies since the end of the Nicaraguan civil war, including seven bodies in recent weeks, of the more than 990 people who disappeared during the 1980s, a newspaper reported Saturday.

The head of Nicaragua's Permanent Human Rights Commission, Lino Hernandez, told La Prensa that most of these people disappeared during the eight-year civil war between the Sandinistas and U.S.-backed right-wing guerrillas known as contras, or in the months following the July 1979 Sandinista Revolution.

His comments followed the discovery this week of a clandestine grave containing six bodies near the Masaya volcano, 20 kilometres southeast of Managua. The victims were likely shot by Sandinista troops 17 years ago shortly after the triumph of the revolution, La Prensa reported.

Among the dead was Miguel Heredia, who was appointed Masaya police chief by then-dictator Anastasio Somoza two months before the revolution.

Mr. Hernandez said many clandestine graves remain undiscovered, but authorities are not interested in finding them because of their national reconciliation strategy.



Chechen rebel separatists escort their injured colleague through a central Grozny street (Reuters photo).

Goods worth millions of dollars lost in massive Pakistan fire

LAHORE, Pakistan (AFP) — A massive fire at Lahore's customs clearance complex Sunday destroyed imported goods worth millions of dollars and increased security fears in this troubled Pakistani city, police said.

The incident, in which there were no casualties, follows a series of bomb explosions in Lahore in the past four months, including a blast at the airport on July 22 that left six people dead.

Police said the fire erupted when a drum full of chemical exploded in a chemical warehouse at the dry port, where imported goods are stored ahead of customs check.

"We are positive it is not a bomb blast," said Javed Noor, a senior police official.

"However, we are investigating whether the fire was accidental ... or an act of sabotage," he told AFP.

The fire spread to a nearby shed, destroying imported goods worth millions of dollars, police said, adding that at least 30 trucks and several jeeps parked in the area were also gutted.

It took the firefighters more than 10 hours to put

out the blaze, the second at the Lahore Dry Port in four months.

A fire on April 8 also resulted in huge losses. Officials said the previous incident was accidental, caused when someone threw a burning cigarette outside one of the sheds.

Around 90 people have died in a series of bomb blasts in Lahore and adjoining districts since mid-April.

Police last month said four suspects had been arrested in some of the blasts and had confessed to working for the Indian Secret Service. New Delhi has denied charges of backing terrorism in Pakistan.

Security agencies have been put on high alert following the fire incident, provincial government officials said.

"There is need for utmost vigilance in view of the recent happenings in the city," an official said.

On April 14, a bomb blast hit a cancer hospital in Lahore run by cricket-turned-politician Imran Khan, killing six people.

An explosion aboard a bus at Bhai Phero near Lahore on April 29 left 52 people

dead. Eight people died in a bus blast in Sheikhupura on May 8 and one person was killed when a bomb exploded at a post office in Lahore on May 26.

On June 10, eight people were killed in three simultaneous blasts in Gujranwala, district, while two died in a bus explosion near Kharian, a garrison town on June 16.

A bomb exploded near a bus terminal in Rawalpindi near the Pakistani capital, Islamabad, on June 27, in which three people were killed.

Three people were killed in a bomb explosion at Faisalabad Railway Station on July 8.

The incidents have caused widespread concern, with political foes blaming Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto's government for lax security in the key province.

More than 14 opposition parties, led by the main opposition Pakistan Muslim League of former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, are waging a united campaign to unseat Ms. Bhutto and force new elections.

Supply cut deepens woes of besieged Seoul students

SEOUL (R) — More than 10,000 police ringed two Seoul campus buildings held by radical students cut off food and medical supplies to keep pressure on them to end a five-day boldnut and surrender, South Korean police said Sunday.

Students allowed a handful of reporters to tour one building where many injured, weary students lay on the floor sleeping. "Please give us food and medicines," one student shouted to a reporter, holding out his hand. "We have no medicine to treat injured students."

One classroom sheltered about 50 injured youths, many with big blisters caused by exposure to skin-searing tear gas.

A police officer said all supplies had been cut off since Saturday morning when police backed by helicopters stormed the Yonsei University in western Seoul for the fourth consecutive day in a bid to end protests calling for reunification with Communist North Korea.

Police stayed in position around the buildings overnight, in contrast to previous nights when they had pulled back.

"We are also seeking to cut power supplies to the buildings," the police officer said.

He said university authorities had so far refused permission to cut the power because a blackout could spoil costly projects under way in laboratories in the science block, one of the occupied buildings.

Police said an estimated 1,100 students were holding out in the two buildings but reporters saw well over 1,000 in the smaller building alone, which looked like a refugee centre. At least half of them were women.

"There are far more than 2,000 students," a student spokesman said but gave no exact figure.

A group of 15 parents carrying food for students at Yonsei begged to be let in but were turned away at the gate.

"Please let me take water and food to my son," an ageing mother cried as she was pushed back by riot police cordoning off the campus.

"You and your kids are the enemy," one policeman retorted. "You are all Communists. We don't give food to the enemy."

A student protester, who identified himself only as a second-year student, told Reuters: "I am not doing this because I am pro-Communist or pro-North Korean. I am here because I am doing the right thing for unification."

State prosecutors and police have vowed to crack down on Hanchangryon, a nationwide federation of radical student councils blamed for masterminding this week's protests at Yonsei.

Prosecutors said Sunday they would charge leaders of the group with violating the country's tough National Security Law, which carries a maximum death penalty.

During repeated skirmishes with police, students set fire to barricades of tyres and desks which they had thrown up around the buildings. Police sent in helicopters to fire tear gas whenever students tried to challenge lines of police.

The students have threatened to explode gas cylinders if police storm the building to arrest them but again offered Sunday to end their protests if they were assured they would not be detained. Police refused to let them go.

Sultan of Brunei's daughter weds

BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN (AFP) — The daughter of Brunei Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah, the world's richest man, was married Sunday in the oil-rich kingdom's wedding of the decade. The marriage took place at the sultan's Nurul Iman Palace, whose grounds were transformed into a fairy land of dazzling gold and gilt decorations for the event. The sultan, accompanied by Philippine President Fidel Ramos and other guests and royal court officials, waited inside a carpeted ceremonial chamber for the young couple. The 50-year-old sultan received the bridegroom, Pengiran Anak Abdul Rahim Pengiran Kemaludin, and led him to his daughter, Princess Rashidah, seated on a golden throne inside the chamber. After the ceremony, the 27-year-old princess, the sultan's first child, and her 26-year-old husband were then driven in a colourful procession around Brunei's capital, Bandar Seri Begawan, which was decorated with ceremonial arches, flags, bunting and coloured lights and portraits of the couple. A state banquet was held Sunday night. The couple had taken their marriage vows at a private religious ceremony Thursday, and Sunday was the first time the royal couple was seen together in public. The wedding vigil will continue until Aug. 24. American pop stars Stevie Wonder and Whitney Houston are to perform at the Jerudong Park Garden on Aug. 20 and 24 as part of the wedding festivities. The sultan, with a personal fortune estimated at more than \$30 billion, has two wives and 10 children. Officials said the union was not an arranged marriage but the pair's own choice.

Multi-pregnancy mum too late for partial abortion

LONDON (R) — The British woman who is pregnant with eight foetuses said Sunday they were alive and kicking, and it was now too late to terminate some of them to give the others a better chance of survival. Mandy Allwood, who has sold her story to the top-selling Sunday tabloid, the News Of The World, told the paper: "Every kick makes me smile because it's a reminder that they're still alive." The gynaecologist treating 14-weeks pregnant Allwood, Kypros Nicolaides of London's Kings College Hospital, had said her best chance of having healthy babies would be a "reduction" operation to terminate six of them, leaving two to grow in her womb. But Ms. Allwood told the News Of The World: "A lot of people don't know what the reduction procedure involves, but I'm too late now to have it. The foetuses are too big to dissolve in my body, which means they will have to come out of me and that could take the healthy ones with them."

22 hurt during boat tribute to Baywatch

CLEVELAND (R) — A waterski boat performing a show based on the popular television series Baywatch injured 22 people when it slammed into the seating area at Sea World of Ohio, Sea World said Saturday. The injured included a 36-year-old man in critical condition with a head injury, a 29-year-old woman with a possible back injury, a pregnant woman in her 30s listed in stable condition and a three-year-old boy whose injuries were described as serious but not life threatening, Cleveland hospital spokesman said. A total of 17 people were taken to the hospital after the crash, the water park said. The accident in Bain Bridge township, about 32 kilometres south-east of Cleveland, occurred at about 6 p.m. ed during the show, officials said.

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Sultan of Brunei daughter wed



A Belgian family kneel in front of flowers of remembrance outside Melissa Russo's parents' house in Grace-Holligne Sunday. The bodies of Russo and Julie Lejeune, who disappeared together in June last year, had been identified Saturday morning in the garden of Marc Dutroux's house. Belgian police resumed a gruesome search for bodies and widened their investigation into a child sex scandal (Reuter photo)

Belgian police resume dig as vice inquiry widens

BRUSSELS (R) — Belgian police resumed a gruesome search for bodies and widened their investigation into a child sex scandal Sunday as the man who led them to three corpses admitted further kidnappings.

Prosecutor Michel Bourlet told Belga News Agency that Marc Dutroux and some of the five other people held by police said they had kidnapped Ann Marchal, 19, and Eefje Lambrecks, 17, in August last year.

"Finding these girls is now the priority," Mr. Bourlet said, adding that he was hopeful of finding them alive.

The search for Marchal and Lambrecks follows the discovery of three corpses in the grounds of Dutroux's terraced house near the southern city of Charleroi, scene of Thursday's dramatic rescue of two other teenage girls from a makeshift concrete dungeon.

Police identified two of

Multi-pregnant mum too late partial abortion

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bodies as of those of the eight-year-olds Julie Lejeune and Melissa Russo, who disappeared together in June last year after going out to play together near their homes.

The third body was simply identified as a former associate of Dutroux.

In scenes reminiscent of the grisly unmasking of British mass murderers Fred and Rosemary West, police used mechanical drills and pneumatic drills to excavate in and around several houses owned by twice-married Dutroux.

Mr. Dutroux and Michel Lelievre have been charged with the abduction and illegal imprisonment of Laetitia Delheze, 14, kidnapped on Aug. 9, and Sabine Dardenne, 12 kidnapped on May 28.

Sabine and Laetitia were rescued from their ordeal after Dutroux showed police the hidden entrance to the underground prison which police had missed on

two previous visits to the house.

Both girls had been sexually abused.

Mr. Dutroux, a 39-year-old electrician, was present at the exhumations on Saturday and was taken away by helicopter to avoid the gathering crowds.

Mr. Dutroux's second wife Michelle Martin, who protests her innocence, will come before a court Monday.

Three other people have been detained after raids on 11 houses Friday night and Saturday morning.

Belgian television said Mr. Dutroux had a child from his first marriage and two — aged three years and eight months — from his second.

Laetitia and Sabine were rescued, but 13 other children have been abducted in Belgium in the past six years. Five had been found dead until Julie and Melissa, raised the total to seven. Six are still missing.

The parents of Julie and Melissa travelled the world following tipoffs about the whereabouts of their daughters, including a visit to South America.

There was no immediate information about how long the girls had been dead.

Laetitia's mother told Belgian Television Friday that her daughter had been raped.

The teenager herself said Saturday she had been heavily drugged throughout her ordeal. She said Sabine had been in despair.

"I will never see my family again," she quoted Sabine as saying during their captivity.

Mr. Dutroux was detained along with Ms. Martin and Mr. Lelievre Tuesday after eyewitness evidence identified his van as being in the area when Laetitia was abducted during the short walk from a swimming pool to her home.

WASHINGTON (AFP) — President Bill Clinton's standing in the polls has slipped against Republican Bob Dole, but he remains in a strong position going into the Democratic convention in Chicago late this month.

The president allowed Sen. Dole and the Republican convention to dominate the news this past week as Mr. Clinton vacationed in the mountains of Wyoming, but that should change as he goes on the offensive before the Aug. 26-29 convention in Chicago.

As the White House expected, the Republicans' fight control on the San Diego convention rebounded to Sen. Dole's benefit and gave him a "bounce" in the polls, eating away at Mr. Clinton's lead.

Most surveys — including a poll issued Saturday by the weekly Newsweek — now show Mr. Clinton with about a 10 percentage point lead over Sen. Dole, about half what the president has had since March.

But as Sen. Dole got a "bounce" in the polls with the intensive television coverage of the convention, Mr. Clinton is expected to get the same during the Democrats four-day love fest in which he will formally be named the party's candidate.

If he is reelected on Nov. 5, Mr. Clinton will be the first Democrat since Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1936 to win a second term.

At this point, Mr. Clinton and his advisors have good reason to think that they will win that elusive second term. According to a survey from early August, nearly two-thirds of voters or 64 per cent consider that his first term has been successful.

The polls are a sharp turnaround from Mr. Clinton's chaotic first two years in the White House, which were capped by the Democrats' devastating loss of the Senate and House of Representatives in November 1994.

This reverse was the turning point of his presidency.

Since then, Mr. Clinton has moved progressively toward the centre, after two years in which the Republicans successfully portrayed him as a leftist as the new Republican majority in Congress turned sharply right.

At the same time, Mr. Clinton was able to put an end to the humiliations of the two preceding years and report some successes, especially in Bosnia-Herzegovina, the Middle East and Ulster.

And, most importantly, the economy — a determining factor in any presidential vote — has continued to grow slowly but steadily. Scandals like the Whitewater affair hang over the president's head like a sword of Damocles that never seems to fall.

"Are we better off than we were four years ago?" Mr. Clinton asked recently in Los Angeles, recycling the question that then-candidate

Ronald Reagan asked in his victorious run for the White House in 1980.

When Mr. Clinton asked the question, he answered it himself: "Yes."

In Chicago, Democrats are hoping to give voice to average Americans to show how Mr. Clinton's policies have meant a better life for all, from areas as diverse as education to the fight against crime.

The goal will be — once again — to depict the Republicans as extremists out of touch with the average American.

Mr. Clinton's offensive in the days before the Chicago convention is expected to be expertly orchestrated with the kick-off to be the formal introduction of the president's book: From Hope To History. And there will be concrete gains: Bills will be signed to raise the minimum wage (Tuesday) and extend medical coverage for people who lose their jobs (Wednesday).

WASHINGTON (AFP) — A White House support aircraft with at least nine people on board crashed in Wyoming where U.S. President Bill Clinton had been on vacation, U.S. officials said Sunday.

Mr. Clinton, his wife Hillary, and their daughter Chelsea had already returned to Washington after a nine-day western vacation and they were not involved in the crash which occurred late Saturday.

"We're aware of a possible air crash apparently involving a mission in Jackson Hole," April Melody, a spokeswoman for the White House, told AFP.

She said the president had been briefed on the report and expressed his concern.

The four-engine C-130 cargo plane belonged to the U.S. Air Force 7th Wing based at Dyess Air Force Base, in Abilene, Texas, Air Force Captain Nomi Russi told AFP in a telephone interview.

The plane, which crashed about 11:48 p.m. central time Saturday (0448 GMT Sunday) was en route from Jackson Hole to John F. Kennedy International Airport in New York, she said.

It had flown to Jackson Hole from Abilene earlier Saturday, Capt. Russi said.

"At this point our best number is eight, although I'd like to stress that we are still trying to confirm that," Capt. Russi said about the number of people on board.

She could not confirm who they were or their condition.

"It was carrying some kind of support for a presidential mission," Capt. Russi said, but she added she did not have any further information.

WASHINGTON (AFP) — Foreign aid workers said Sunday troops had killed more than 200 Hutus including many women and children in two incidents in central Burundi after an army coup on July 25.

The aid workers told Reuters that more than 200 Hutus were killed by troops on Aug. 7 on a series of hills at Rutaganya Commune in Muramvya province, east of the capital Bujumbura.

They also said troops killed 23 people on July 26 at Muyange Hill in Gitega Commune in the central Burundi province of Gitega.

The workers, who refused to be identified, showed Reuters lists with ages and names of the dead — almost exclusively women, children and the elderly. They said they were sure the final death toll was far higher.

Asked about the reports, army spokesman Lieutenant-Colonel Longin Minani said: "There have been no serious military operations in these areas but when we find Hutu rebels we go after them ferociously."

Military ruler Pierre Buyoya, a retired major in the Tutsi-dominated army, says he seized power to head off genocide and has repeatedly promised to restore discipline in the military.

But he has also said the army will hunt down Hutu rebels unless they renounce what he says is a plan of genocide against the Tutsi minority. The rebels accuse the army of carrying out genocide against the Hutu majority and have vowed to fight on.

More than 150,000 people have been killed in Burundi in three years of a vicious civil war between Hutu rebels and the army, with

civilians also being massacred in reprisal attacks.

Human rights groups have estimated killings in Burundi were running at the rate of at least 1,000 a month earlier this year but increased insecurity in the countryside has prevented independent experts from investigating many reported killings.

In neighbouring Rwanda, which has the same ethnic mix as Burundi, in 1994 up to one million Tutsis and moderate Hutus were killed by Hutu militia and mobs in a campaign led by the then Hutu-dominated government.

Regional African nations imposed sanctions against Burundi on July 31, demanding a return to constitutional government and talks between Burundi's rulers and Hutu rebels, six days after the army overthrow of Hutu President Sylvestre Ntibantunganya.

Two planes flew 18 non-essential U.N. staff out of Burundi Saturday as part of a pullout by foreigners warned by their embassies to leave the country because of fears of increased bloodshed.

Aid workers fear renewed attacks on food convoys in

Burundi because African regional ministers decided Friday to block food aid for up to a quarter of a million displaced Burundians.

Ministers agreed sanctions should be comprehensive and said only medicine and emergency basic food aid to 41,000 Rwandan Hutu refugees in Burundi would be exempt from the embargo.

Aid officials in Bujumbura said Sunday Burundian troops wounded two Rwandan refugees when they shot in the air Saturday to disperse a crowd at a camp in northeast Burundi.

SEATTLE (R) — Authorities banding dozens of major fires in the western United States called on the army Saturday to reinforce firefighting resources stretched to their limits.

Renee Snyder of the National Interagency Fire Centre said a battalion of 500 soldiers, probably from Fort Carson, Colorado, would be sent to one of 39 major fires, joining more than 17,600 people already on the lines in Arizona, California, Colorado, Florida, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, Oregon, Utah and Wyoming.

She said the soldiers likely would be sent to California, where 10 major fires were burning, driven by gusty winds and fuelled by bone-dry brush and tinder.

In hard-hit Oregon, National Guard troops were being trained and were expected to join firefighting efforts Sunday, and National

Guard troops also were activated in Montana, Snyder said.

The largest of the active fires, on the Warm Springs Indian Reservation in central Oregon, grew to 108,000 acres (43,000 hectares) but was 60 per cent contained and was expected to be fully contained Tuesday. The week-old fire, believed to be human-caused, has destroyed 11 homes and seven smaller structures.

The nearby Donnybrook fire had scorched 94,000 acres (38,000 hectares) of rugged brush country and was not expected to be contained until the end of October.

In Washington state, about 900 soldiers and 200 firefighters contained a 57,000-acre (23,000 hectares) brush fire that apparently was ignited during a shooting exercise on a vast army firing range near Yakima.

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Dole pulls close to Clinton in polls

SPRINGFIELD, Illinois (R) — Bob Dole pulled to within two points of President Bill Clinton in the latest polls Saturday, leaving his staff boasting that "we have a real race at last."

Meanwhile, the Republican presidential candidate received a joyous reception in the heart of the U.S. Midwest, a key battleground of the 1996 campaign.

The latest Newsweek poll showed Sen. Dole only two points behind Mr. Clinton — 44 to 42 — in the aftermath of the Republican National Convention which ended two days ago with delegates declaring they were united behind the 73-year-old Kansan. Sen. Dole had gone into the convention behind Mr. Clinton by up to 20 points in most polls.

The Dole camp said its own polling also showed a dramatic narrowing of the race, putting Sen. Dole only four points behind Mr. Clinton.

"We have a real race at last," said John Buckley, Sen. Dole's communication director.

On the campaign trail, several thousand people cheered Sen. Dole, his wife Elizabeth and running mate Jack Kemp as they endured sweltering heat at a rally inside a livestock station at the Illinois State Fair in Springfield. The event left all on the podium save Sen. Dole drenched in perspiration.

The crowd chanted "bye, bye Bill" and "Clinton must go," and waved Dole-Kemp banners as the candidate stood on a podium with a backdrop of hales of hay and declared, "the president says the era of his government is

over. Well it will be for him on Nov. 5. They trust the government I trust the American people."

After the speech, Sen. Dole paid a "good luck" visit to the tomb of Abraham Lincoln where he and Mr. Kemp rubbed the bronze nose on a bust of the first Republican president. Sen. Dole even signed \$5 bills for tourists at the tomb.

Sen. Dole said, "polls are polls" but declared the latest ones were encouraging and reflected a successful convention.

In his campaign appearances since the convention, he has pressed a call for a 15 per cent tax cut.

Charles Black, a senior campaign advisor, declared the convention a success, saying, "it is clear there has been some movement and a trend to Dole."

But he cautioned that the Democrats were about to have their day with the Democratic National Convention starting in Chicago in just over a week.

Mr. Clinton, winding up a vacation in Wyoming, used his weekly radio address to lash out at Sen. Dole's tax cut proposals, saying they would cause either severe cuts in social programmes or massive budget deficits.

Without once mentioning Sen. Dole by name, Mr. Clinton delivered his harshest criticism to date of his opponent's platform, which he painted as too extreme.

"My tax cut is limited in size it's worth \$110 billion," Mr. Clinton said in the address. "Theirs is five times as

much — \$550 billion.

"We can afford ours. We can't afford theirs," he added. "My tax cut is targeted theirs is indiscriminate."

While the Democrats were certain to increase their political profile, Mr. Black said the Republican Party was also worried about the effect of Ross Perot on the campaign — not because of the numbers of votes he may receive but because of "the \$50 million or \$60 million" he may spend on television ads attacking Sen. Dole.

Mr. Perot Saturday won the nomination of the political party he founded and paid for, setting the stage for a presidential campaign that at the outset seemed rich in money but poor in popularity.

Mr. Perot beat former Colorado Gov. Richard Lamm 65.2 per cent to 34.8 per cent of 49,266 ballots cast by members of the Reform Party, said national coordinator Russell Vemey.

The results showed that less than five per cent of the 1.1 million ballots mailed to party members were returned.

This result seemed to echo a national lack of enthusiasm for Mr. Perot, with a new Newsweek magazine poll showing Mr. Perot getting three per cent of the votes in a three-way race with Sen. Dole and Mr. Clinton.

But Mr. Vemey was upbeat, saying the votes were cast "in a brand new process creating the brand new field of dreams."

He said the process produced something "that did not exist — a third choice on the 1996 election ballot."

WASHINGTON (AFP) — President Bill Clinton's standing in the polls has slipped against Republican Bob Dole, but he remains in a strong position going into the Democratic convention in Chicago late this month.

The president allowed Sen. Dole and the Republican convention to dominate the news this past week as Mr. Clinton vacationed in the mountains of Wyoming, but that should change as he goes on the offensive before the Aug. 26-29 convention in Chicago.

As the White House expected, the Republicans' fight control on the San Diego convention rebounded to Sen. Dole's benefit and gave him a "bounce" in the polls, eating away at Mr. Clinton's lead.

Most surveys — including a poll issued Saturday by the weekly Newsweek — now show Mr. Clinton with about a 10 percentage point lead over Sen. Dole, about half what the president has had since March.

But as Sen. Dole got a "bounce" in the polls with the intensive television coverage of the convention, Mr. Clinton is expected to get the same during the Democrats four-day love fest in which he will formally be named the party's candidate.

If he is reelected on Nov. 5, Mr. Clinton will be the first Democrat since Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1936 to win a second term.

At this point, Mr. Clinton and his advisors have good reason to think that they will win that elusive second term. According to a survey from early August, nearly two-thirds of voters or 64 per cent consider that his first term has been successful.

The polls are a sharp turnaround from Mr. Clinton's chaotic first two years in the White House, which were capped by the Democrats' devastating loss of the Senate and House of Representatives in November 1994.

This reverse was the turning point of his presidency.

Since then, Mr. Clinton has moved progressively toward the centre, after two years in which the Republicans successfully portrayed him as a leftist as the new Republican majority in Congress turned sharply right.

At the same time, Mr. Clinton was able to put an end to the humiliations of the two preceding years and report some successes, especially in Bosnia-Herzegovina, the Middle East and Ulster.

And, most importantly, the economy — a determining factor in any presidential vote — has continued to grow slowly but steadily. Scandals like the Whitewater affair hang over the president's head like a sword of Damocles that never seems to fall.

"Are we better off than we were four years ago?" Mr. Clinton asked recently in Los Angeles, recycling the question that then-candidate

Ronald Reagan asked in his victorious run for the White House in 1980.

When Mr. Clinton asked the question, he answered it himself: "Yes."

In Chicago, Democrats are hoping to give voice to average Americans to show how Mr. Clinton's policies have meant a better life for all, from areas as diverse as education to the fight against crime.

The goal will be — once again — to depict the Republicans as extremists out of touch with the average American.

Mr. Clinton's offensive in the days before the Chicago convention is expected to be expertly orchestrated with the kick-off to be the formal introduction of the president's book: From Hope To History. And there will be concrete gains: Bills will be signed to raise the minimum wage (Tuesday) and extend medical coverage for people who lose their jobs (Wednesday).

WASHINGTON (AFP) — A White House support aircraft with at least nine people on board crashed in Wyoming where U.S. President Bill Clinton had been on vacation, U.S. officials said Sunday.

Mr. Clinton, his wife Hillary, and their daughter Chelsea had already returned to Washington after a nine-day western vacation and they were not involved in the crash which occurred late Saturday.

"We're aware of a possible air crash apparently involving a mission in Jackson Hole," April Melody, a spokeswoman for the White House, told AFP.

She said the president had been briefed on the report and expressed his concern.

The four-engine C-130 cargo plane belonged to the U.S. Air Force 7th Wing based at Dyess Air Force Base, in Abilene, Texas, Air Force Captain Nomi Russi told AFP in a telephone interview.

The plane, which crashed about 11:48 p.m. central time Saturday (0448 GMT Sunday) was en route from Jackson Hole to John F. Kennedy International Airport in New York, she said.

It had flown to Jackson Hole from Abilene earlier Saturday, Capt. Russi said.

"At this point our best number is eight, although I'd like to stress that we are still trying to confirm that," Capt. Russi said about the number of people on board.</

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Jordan Times

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Mood shifting positively

THE ATTIRE and discourse of His Majesty King Hussein yesterday reflected the mood of country and leadership following two days of riots that were both alarming and destructive. Unlike on Friday and Saturday, when the King appeared on television to address the nation or when he was shown addressing the troops, being dressed on both occasions in military uniform, the King Sunday looked relaxed and assured while visiting the Public Security Department accompanied by Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti.

Now that the emergency situation is hopefully over and behind us, the authorities, as the King said, will investigate and try to locate those who were responsible for the destruction, arson and looting that took place in the cities and towns of the south.

Meanwhile, the prime minister who still faces an angry opposition, will most certainly start political talks with his opponents and detractors both in Parliament and outside it. While it will be near impossible for him to reverse his government's decision on lifting subsidies, as demanded by the opposition and the protesters, it is not too late to try to explain once more, but in more candid and clarity, the implications of going back on our commitments to the donor countries and the International Monetary Fund, commitments that serve first and foremost Jordan's higher interests.

Mr. Kabariti needs not only to explain to the nation and Parliament the consequences of retracting this decision, but he also needs to win back his comfortable majority in the House, a majority that gave him and his team a great start. After all Mr. Kabariti will have to plan for facing Parliament again when it convenes for its last session in fall.

Not only that, as we recognise Jordan's interest in what the Kabariti government has been doing so far, and as we recognise that a great deal of progress has been achieved already, especially on the level of fighting corruption and for structural reform, we believe that the government has to continue the fight to implement its programme. And we think, as Mr. Kabariti himself affirmed on several occasions, that the best way to achieve his government's objectives is through dialogue. But we believe that the dialogue we had so far was not either frank enough or deep enough to win the government the much-needed popular consensus that it badly needs. There has been a great deal of misunderstanding, and mishandling, of the issues at hand. What the government should do in the coming stage is to enhance democracy, raise the banner of inclusion and tolerance, ensure more transparency, listen more to the people and explain its own positions on the basis that the people have the right to know, and know about all.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

THE RIOTING that swept several southern towns in Jordan in the past two days can by no means solve the problem resulting from the increases in bread prices, but can surely result in damages and losses to the country and the Jordanian people, said Al Ra'i Arabic daily. The rioters expressed their protest against the increases by smashing cars, burning private and public institutions, wasting school textbooks and ruining fruit trees which have been there for the public's benefit, said the daily. This is by no means acceptable to a country which believes in democracy and whose people have often expressed their faith in constructive dialogue to solve social, political and economic problems, according to the paper. It is the right of every Jordanian to express his or her feelings and it is the right of their representatives in Parliament to present their views, but all this should be done within the framework of the law and in a constitutional manner, stressed the paper. Expression of views and feelings does not by any means give any person the right to attack other people or damage their property, said the paper which condemned the rioting as an uncivilised manner to express one's feelings no matter how important the cause for which the protesters aim to serve and no matter how vital their objectives are.

A WRITER for Al Dustour called on the Council of Higher Education to change the present system of accepting students in private and public universities to allow for more free and fair competition among the school graduates. It is no more acceptable for the universities to remain the monopoly of the influential people who can at will secure seats for their children at state-run universities and it is unfair to see half the seats filled by students whose names appear on special lists given favour by certain circles in the country, said Hamadeh Faraneh. The writer said that students with no influential or wealthy people to back them fall victim to the present faulty system, and if they cannot go abroad for higher studies they face a grim future. The writer criticised the idea which is being contemplated by the Council of Higher Education to allow private universities to accept students who at least acquired 65 per cent in Tawjithi examinations average grades, up from 60 per cent. He said that such move would further increase the misery of the largest sector of students who fail to join the state universities, and would consecrate the present system which favours influential people.

Economic Review

Jordan's housing paradox

By Dr. Yusuf Mansur

NO ONE can underestimate the importance of the housing sector and the role it plays in the Jordanian economy. Housing, in 1985-1991, accounted for almost one half of the gross fixed capital formation in Jordan; the construction sector contributed approximately 8 per cent per annum of the GDP in the period 1988-1992; and the annual demand for housing averages about 22,000 new housing units per year. However, there is an anomaly in this sector that defies regular economic reasoning: While there are over 77,000 empty housing units in the country, construction is still rampant, and land prices continue to increase signalling an increase in the demand or a decrease in the supply for housing, or some combination of the two.

Such a phenomena is considered odd, usually when the quantity supplied exceeds the quantity demanded the market price falls to a level that clears both supply and demand. This equilibrating mechanism has not worked in the case of housing in Jordan, why? The answer lies in the institutional setting of the market.

In 1953 the Jordanian legislature adapted many ideas from European rental legislation, which after the World War II was very sympathetic to tenants on account that most buildings had been destroyed during the war. As a result, under Jordanian Law No. 62 of the year 1953, the tenant was allowed to continue living on the premises, in spite of the expiration of the rental contract and regardless of the owner's desire. This notion was further underscored when in 1982, a Law No. 29 was passed as a temporary measure and 12 years later became a permanent law, Law No. 11 in 1994. Article 5A of this law allows the tenant to occupy the premises after the contracted rental period had lapsed, thereby, rendering the rent contract useless.

Rental law is probably the most anti-competitive law in Jordan and the single most harmful and outdated piece of legislation ever made. It has survived because people

thought it was beneficial to tenants, however, it can be argued — and I have made this point in two previous articles — that the present legislation harms the tenant and tends to increase prices beyond the market determined price. The thesis is as follows: Investors simply stop building apartments for rent, rather they direct their efforts to selling their apartments instead of renting them; thus rental property becomes a scarce commodity and, as a result, the rental cost increases.

Moreover, the way land is zoned in Jordan leaves a lot to

Amman is ranked among the top ten most expensive cities for real estate in the world even though one third of the land zoned for building is vacant

be desired. Some land can only be sold in tens of dunums (a thousand square metres) which makes a cheap dunum beyond the reach of ordinary citizens. Some land is classified as a zone A land, which means that only 36 per cent of such a land can be built; a person that dreams of building a modest home has to pay clearly for the land and then is able to build only on one third of it, why? There is no logical reason for this and there probably never will be. But it does cause the demand for land to rise by two thirds in some areas.

Amman is ranked among the top ten most expensive cities for real estate in the world even though one third of

the land zoned for building is vacant. However, home ownership is high (75 per cent) relative to other parts of the world, vacancy rates are high (11 per cent), and the average household size is presently about seven persons. The situation is clearly anomalous.

But let us view the behaviour of landlords who seem to stubbornly hold on to their lands and refuse to sell at below fictitious prices. In fact some landowners would prefer to wait for several years than sell at a lower price. Meanwhile, they would have forsaken the opportunity to take the money and invest it in some venture at an earlier date. However, thinking of the opportunity cost of delaying the sale is not a well-developed concept yet among landowners for at least three reasons: 1) lack of investment that have economically viable rates of return (return on investment is estimated at 6 per cent); 2) the simple lifestyle of many of the landlords which does not require lavish spending, except for marriage and death occasions where huge sums of money are spent on ceremonial functions, money is necessary only for subsistence; and 3) the uncertainty of the region prior to the peace accord where an exodus after another caused land prices to inflate beyond people's wildest dreams turning some from rags to riches and making great folk-tales of those who sold just before "that last war".

The institutional setting is the driving force behind land prices and what may seem as a paradox is naught but the interplay of market distorting forces. The land prices in Jordan will continue to rise at least for the rest of this decade because the market distortions will persist at least for the next four years. A final piece of advice: If you have rented a house or an apartment before 1991, do not leave it and attempt to build your own dream house, instead, buy land and stay where you are.

The U.N.: Close it down and start again?

By Pehr G. Gyllenhammar

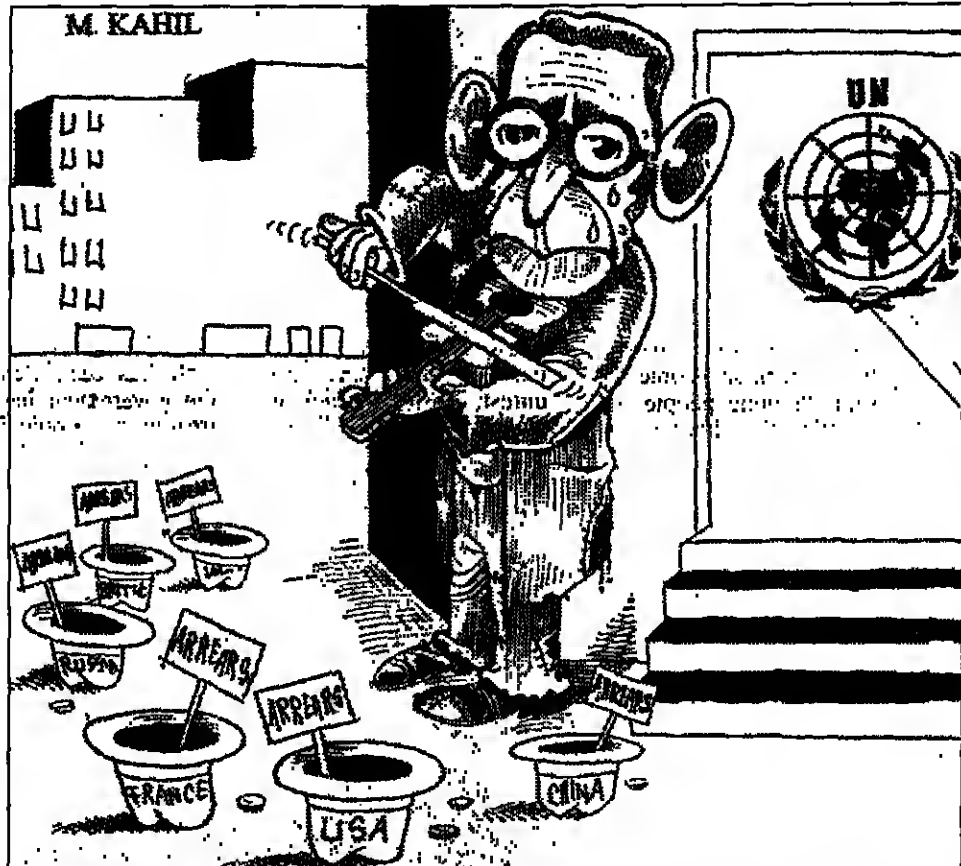
NEW YORK — The United Nations should declare bankruptcy and conduct a fundamental reorganisation and downsizing — all at the same time.

Finances are a mess, with many member nations in default on their dues, including a whopping \$1.5 billion from the United States. Without changes, collecting those dues will be impossible. A few years ago I served on a working group co-chaired by Paul Volcker, former chairman of the U.S. Federal Reserve, and Shijuro Ogata, senior adviser at Yamachichi Securities in Tokyo. Its task was recommending improvements to the pitiful finances of the United Nations.

On the surface the job was easy. If only the rules were followed, the money would be there to finance operations. But since only 11 countries paid in full and on time, the United Nations always lived from hand to mouth. Member states that did not meet their commitments did not lose their votes or pay interest on what was owed. Sanctions are never used against members who default on their payments.

The U.N.'s 50th anniversary was a missed opportunity. Instead of holding a birthday party, at which world leaders who had not paid their dues subjected the audience to their oratory, the secretary-general should have declared bankruptcy and closed the place down. There was no money left to pay for anything.

But solving the financial problems will only scratch the surface if other fundamental problems are not addressed. The organisation is bloated, too diverse and too unwieldy. U.N. agencies are too independent to be coordinated properly and too bureaucratic to function efficiently. Morale is low, and



leaders are appointed for their political affiliation not their proven abilities.

The member states have to agree on a transparent process for selecting the best possible U.N. leadership to take on the task. Old political cronies are not the best executives to run a complex organisation.

It is ironic that an institution built on human rights, the dignity of the individual, social justice, democracy and free speech can tolerate the current election process for secretary-general. It is opaque and Byzantine, and it produces mediocre results. It can best be compared with the Vatican, where smoke from the chimney reveals whether a new Pope has been chosen.

If I am correctly informed, in 1992 the present secretary-general was elected in the seventh round, each round

having been kept secret from the public. It is said that the United States was expecting a stalemate over the Egyptian, and was asleep when the United Nations acquired new secretary-general.

Boutros Ghali would like to stay on. After initially saying he wanted to serve only a single term, he has changed his mind. Unfortunately for him, the United States has declared that it will veto a second five-year term. This is typical. The big guns call the shots.

If the United States is committed to the veto, the search should start now for a successor. The world organisation should have its leader selected from an open list of candidates, proposed in a pre-agreed manner and with qualifications to manage a complex organisation. There should be ample time for the proposed candidates to

appear publicly and to present their credentials for the world to see. Thereafter, a voting round should be open to public scrutiny, and the leader elected.

And the new leader's mandate must be clear — to make the United Nations lean, focused and efficient.

The United Nations has a wonderful charter. If it were ever true that if something did not exist it would have to be invented, it is true for the United Nations. But what an opportunity, a new beginning would create — to start with a clean slate and build an organisation to deal with today's conditions and tomorrow's world. It's not too late.

The writer is a former chairman of Volvo. The above article is reprinted from the International Herald Tribune.

LETTERS

In fairness to Kabariti

THE DEVELOPMENT Jordan has witnessed over the past four decades is unparalleled even in other developing countries with far more natural resources and God-given riches. Ours has been a good example of nation building, with what it entailed in the building of a whole modern infrastructure of electric power, waterworks, roads, sewage disposal plants, dams, irrigation schemes, ambitious social development programmes, primary health care and tertiary medical facilities, which rival the best in the world. In addition we have free primary and secondary education, public and private universities, industries and many other services that people have become accustomed to take for granted. All this, added to the defence bill, needed money and lots of it. Thanks to Arab funding this was available in the seventies and early eighties. Suddenly, however, the stream dried up and we were left with the old complacency and a debt of \$9 billion to pay back to our creditors.

Since the crash of 1989, successive governments embraced a tight economic restructuring programme in accordance with IMF and World Bank requirements. Parliament concurred with this policy as it approved the budget year after year. The new prime minister, Abdul Karim Kabariti, came face to face with realities that left him basically with only two choices:

The first (for which so many traditional politicians would opt) is that of squeezing through the sour medicine in small repetitive and quite ineffective doses that would do little to cure the unwary patient, but do a great deal to keep the popularity of the medicine man with a public that is hopelessly uneducated in matters of simple arithmetic.

The second (which well-respected economists describe as the best choice, academically speaking) was administering the right drug in the right dose at the risk of trading popularity for honesty.

Mr. Kabariti chose the latter. For the short time his government has been in office, he took bold steps in the fight against well-entrenched and inherited corruption in high places like public security, customs and income tax departments. He went a long way in rehabilitating Jordan's relationship with sister Arab states to reopen doors of employment for our technical workers and teachers. He started the painful process of streamlining a deadly bureaucracy in an effort to create a more favourable climate for Arab and foreign investments so as to create jobs and help curb the spiralling rate of unemployment.

The recent riots with the destruction and burning of public and private property (like Ministry of Supply stores, shops, banks and, most distressing of all, a mother and child care clinic in Tafleh) cannot be justified by our fence-riding, traditional politicians as an understandable expression of public frustration.

Prime Minister Kabariti should not yield to the calls for his resignation. He has done nothing dishonourable. He should wait for the coming ordinary session of Parliament and face up to any no-confidence motions the "representatives" of the people wish to throw at him. If he has to step down, then he should come down fighting. It only betrays a man of his character, integrity and courage.

Senator Ghaith Shubailat, MD, FRCS, FACS, Amman.

Re-evaluation process to start when law and order re-established

(Continued from page 1)

the umbrella of law and order."

Often over the past few years, the King or his governments have spokeo critically of the performance of the Parliament and the press, especially the tabloids. In fact it is the perceived failure of these two institutions to rise to the challenge and responsibility entailed in democracy that has irked the regime during these past seven years.

"Often, we have witnessed irresponsible positions and stances taken to

the name of democracy," said the government source. "What we need in the future therefore is a national accord which would re-establish that democracy and responsibility go hand in hand."

The source added: "Quite often the King needed to intervene personally in the affairs of Parliament when it was becoming apparent that important decisions which serve the Kingdom's higher interests were undermined, either by members whose sole focus rested on securing re-election or by blocs that did not always take the real inter-

ests of the state into consideration."

A number of parliamentarians and analysts interviewed by the Jordan Times maintained that King Hussein's decision to terminate the extraordinary session of Parliament abruptly and immediately after the riots broke out on Friday indicates lack of faith on his part that Parliament would "rise to the level of responsibility" he expects of it, as a source close to the government put it.

"The decision to terminate the extraordinary session so quickly and imme-

diately after the breakout of riots indicates concern that Parliament would become a forum for individual members and blocs to merely improve their public image, which in turn might fuel further unrest and ferment trouble," a senior member of Parliament said. "Which explains the sense of relief felt by some parliamentarians as the decision could save them from a dilemma over what kind of position they would have to assume vis-a-vis the riots."

In the clearest indication yet of what direction the new re-evaluation effort

should take, the King had this to say on Saturday (in an informal address he made during his tour of Karak and other areas in the south): "We want to teach the next generations and our citizens the art of dialogue, to give and take until we reach the best solution by using our minds and always by keeping the interest of the nation as our top priority and above any other consideration."

How these words will translate within and at the end of the envisaged re-evaluation process, is not known for now. All the

sources interviewed by the Jordan Times appear sure, however, that the new effort will be undertaken by the Kabariti, rather than a new government.

"While we are being partly blamed for this week's riots, I must say that the situation is different from that of 1989," the government source said. "Prime Minister Kabariti still has a major role to play in the months ahead, especially in restoring normal life to the country," he added. "The King will want him by his side when the effort is launched to take us even further forward."

Qatar to invest \$18b in energy projects

ABU DHABI (AFP) — Qatar is planning to invest nearly \$18 billion in projects to boost its oil output capacity and exploit the biggest gas field in the world, official figures have showed.

The Gulf state, a small OPEC oil producer, will spend nearly 65.4 billion Qatari riyals (\$17.96 billion) until the year 2000 to develop its oil wells, tap the giant North gas field and expand its refining and petrochemical sectors, the Organisation of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries (OAPEC) said.

The investments, some of which will come from foreign partners, include around 31.3 billion riyals (\$8.59 billion) on two liquefied natural gas (LNG) ventures, Ras Laffan and Qatar-gas.

Another \$3.9 billion LNG project is under negotiation with the U.S. company Enron.

The first two LNG ventures have already been launched following the signing of several supply contracts with customers in Asia and other areas.

The completion of such projects by 2000 will make Qatar the biggest producer of LNG in the world and sharply boost its income.

Officials have said production could exceed 20 million tonnes per year.

The offshore North field is the world's largest single reservoir of natural gas, with estimated reserves of 7.1 trillion cubic metres (236.6 trillion cubic feet). It has made Qatar the third top gas power in the world after Russia and Iran. Qatar has also launched projects to develop its oil fields to raise capacity to around 500,000 barrels per day from 400,000 bpd.

Apart from government coffers, financing for the energy projects has come from foreign partners and loans from regional and international banks.

CIA teams up with U.S. economic policymakers

WASHINGTON (R) — The spy community is tightening links to U.S. economic policymakers to help forge the best possible trade deals and bolster other American economic interests. CIA Director John Deutch has disclosed.

Replying to questions from the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, Mr. Deutch said intelligence support for bilateral and multilateral negotiations, "which was occasional a few years ago, ... has now become standard operating procedure."

"We have upgraded intelligence liaison support at key economic agencies," he said in a statement included in the panel's recently published hearing record on national security threats. He mentioned an "expanded briefing programme" for senior officials at the Treasury, the National Economic Council and the White House Council of Economic Advisers.

Also, the head of the National Intelligence Council, which pools the work of the CIA and its sister spy outfits, and the national intelligence officer for economics have instituted periodic meetings with key economic policymakers "to focus collection and analysis on key economic policy issues."

Mr. Deutch also disclosed that he had named a personal representative to the office of the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR).

which leads U.S. negotiations with other countries on trade, direct investment and commodity policy.

Mr. Deutch upgraded his link to the USTR late last year "to bolster intelligence support and make sure we are focused on what the USTR's specific needs are," spokesman Mark Mansfield said. He declined to name the person, citing CIA policy.

Mr. Deutch and his predecessors have always insisted they would not use U.S. spies to help American business gain a competitive advantage. Instead, they have said, they alert policymakers when foreign firms use bribery to win contracts from U.S. competitors and monitor threats to international financial stability and U.S. interests.

"We do not do industrial espionage," Mr. Deutch said last August, although alleged U.S. spying to help trade negotiators has already plunged the United States into hot water with Japan and France.

Japan formally asked the State Department in October to comment on reports that U.S. spies eavesdropped on Japanese negotiators during auto-parts talks last year. Assistant Secretary of State Winston Lord replied that the United States did not comment on intelligence matters but valued its close ties to Japan and had no desire to harm them.

In February last year,

France, which Mr. Deutch recently said was among a handful of countries involved in "extensive" economic espionage against the United States, asked for the recall of five Americans, four of them listed as diplomats, for allegedly trying to bribe French officials to uncover world trade positions. The Americans left.

But current and former CIA officials drew a sharp contrast between what they say the U.S. intelligence community is doing in this sphere and covert operations of the type they accuse French and other spy services of mounting against Washington.

"The critical difference is that this is information in support of U.S. policymaking, not commercial or industrial espionage," said Robert Gates, who began shifting the CIA's post-cold war focus toward economic issues as director from November 1991 to January 1993.

That stands in contrast to the activities of 20 or more foreign intelligence services which are targeted, not on the U.S. government policymaking process, but on U.S. industry, with a view to stealing proprietary technologies, contract information and other things that make them competitive in a deal-by-deal sense," Mr. Gates added in a telephone interview.

Skills shortage to force Asian businesses to West — report

SINGAPORE (AFP) — Asia is expected to lose many of its businesses to the West over the next 10 years because of a scarcity of skilled labour, according to a report.

"The next decade will not see Asia develop anything close to the depth of skilled labour, particularly in services, that exists in most developed Western societies," according to the report by the Hong Kong-based Political and Economic Risk Consultancy Ltd. (PERC).

It predicted that many Asians who had developed skills would choose to move to the West rather than work in the region's "more congested environment" and consequently, the cost for skilled labour will be bid up in Asia relative to elsewhere in the world.

"Taking a 10-year view, the most significant shift in business may not be from one Asian country to another but from Asia to countries like Australia, Ireland, Canada and the U.S.," PERC said in the report, "Asia in the Year 2006."

It pointed out that the four countries were now more cost-effective providers of labour skills that will be increasingly in demand in Asia.

"These are value-added skills that really differentiate 'developed' from 'developing' status, and in this sense Asia is likely to fall further behind the

West instead of narrowing the gap through sustained high rates of real economic growth," PERC said.

The report also said that it would be increasingly difficult for places like Singapore and Hong Kong to stake out a value-added role for themselves.

This was because neighbouring countries were trying to develop certain skills internally while technology eliminates distance obstacles for more cost-effective competitors, it said.

PERC said an average office in Hong Kong and Singapore a decade from now was likely to have more computers than people.

"The people who do staff the offices will rely for back-room support not on their internal resources or those elsewhere in the region but on skill pools in much more distant locations," it said.

PERC said the two single most important shapers of the business environment in Asia in the medium term will be technology and new forms of intra-regional competition.

It said modern technology would clash with entrenched monopolies and cartels in Asia, adding that technology could make many economic liberalisation measures irrelevant.

For example, foreign banks may not need branches in China or Thailand when they can do some of the most prof-

itable business over the Internet, outflanking government regulatory authorities altogether, it said.

As companies become more global in nature and technology breaks down the traditional walls of business, governments would find their powers increasingly challenged by "borderless" forces with which they could not negotiate, the report said.

"Failure to let in this technology can put an entire economy at a fatal competitive disadvantage, yet the inability to effectively regulate the same technology will pose a threat in what many governments in Asia consider to be their legitimate authority," it said.

PERC also predicted a new type of competition for Asia in which "the winners and losers were not determined so much by cost and quality criteria but by domestic market leverage."

"In such a world, the most efficient company in Hong Kong can stand on competitive chance against a much less efficient company from China if the Chinese company can call all of China's market, but the Hong Kong company is locked out from the same market," it said.

There were already early hints of such kind of clout and "this is likely to become much more of a region-wide concern within the next 10 years," PERC said.

Study: Foreign investors shun Arab Gulf markets

MANAMA (AFP) — Reform in several Arab Gulf countries have so far failed to attract foreign investors, a Bahrain-based offshore bank has said, calling for more liberalisation and better market regulation.

"Gulf stock markets have attracted less than one per cent of the foreign private capital invested in developing countries," according to a study by the Bahrain International Bank.

It said Oman and Bahrain have taken measures to ease restrictions on foreign investment, but Gulf countries need to go further in terms of liberalisation, to improve regulation and allow independent market studies.

HOROSCOPE FORECAST FOR MONDAY, AUGUST 19, 1996

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righer Foundation

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) This is a good day to hunt around for artistic pieces to make your home more charming. Later tonight be careful of shady persons.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 21) Sunday pursuits can bring happiness during the daytime today but steer clear of a disagreement with your mate in the evening.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Concentrate on improving your image at this time and develop your character in tight channels. Steer clear of one who can be sarcastic.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Be happy with your mate today at recreations which you both enjoy, but later tonight rest up and plan the new week well.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) You can have inspiring and worthwhile talks with partners today whose ideas are different to your own, but stick to your own beliefs.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Plan those activities which most please you during the daytime today which will make the days ahead brighter, but avoid dull tasks tonight.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) Go out early today with friends and have a happy time with them. In the evening, get to work on some project you started recently.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Be happy with your family today and tonight fix up your home as you want it to be. Plan for the next coming days activities.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Get into amusements which make you feel happy and alive today, but later tonight drive with care on the highway and avoid possible accidents.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to Jan. 20) Study how to improve your financial status today and think in a more modern vein. Be frugal later tonight with your assets.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Pursue what you most want in a positive and sure manner today, and it is yours, then take it easy later tonight with your loved ones.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) You are inspired early this morning how to gain your aspirations so carry through quickly for best results to follow by later this evening.

Birthstone of August: Peridot — Golden Quartz

Steve Forbes backs radical overhaul of IMF

SAN DIEGO (R) — Unsuccessful Republican presidential candidate Steve Forbes has called for "junking" the International Monetary Fund (IMF), saying it had wrecked nations like Mexico and Russia with its austere economic policies.

Mr. Forbes likened the IMF to doctors 200 years ago who tried to cure patients with blood-sucking leeches.

"That of course got rid of the pain and suffering because it got rid of the patient," Mr. Forbes told a forum sponsored by private conglomerate Koch Indus-

tries Inc of Wisconsin.

"You can't sue an international agency for malpractice but at least we can get rid of the doctors who are guilty of botching these operations," he added.

Mr. Forbes called for "junking" the IMF, established after the World War II to help countries with struggling economies, the IMF lends tens of billions of dollars each year. To qualify for the credits, nations must follow tough anti-inflationary economic policies that the IMF sees as a prerequisite for their return to economic

health.

The fund is no stranger to criticism, but it often comes from the left side of the political spectrum, not the right. Left-wing critics have attacked the IMF for advocating overly stringent poli-

cies, accusing it of forcing nations to cut back on spending to help the poor.

Mr. Forbes contended the IMF stifles economic growth by not supporting tax cuts and other pro-growth policies.

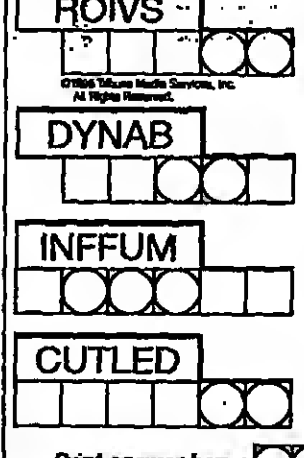
THE BETTER HALF By Glasbergen



"My favorite activities are channel surfing, Internet surfing and calorie surfing!"

JUMBLE

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.



Saturday's Jumble: CHAOS SNACK LIQUID WEDGED
Answer: That duck was good at — WISE QUACKS

THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME

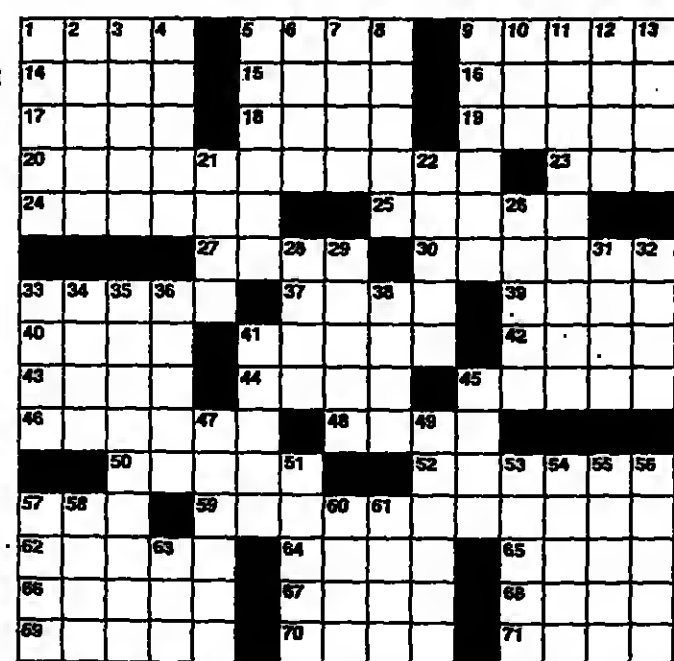
by Henri Arnold and Mike Argillon



Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

THE Daily Crossword by Don Johnson

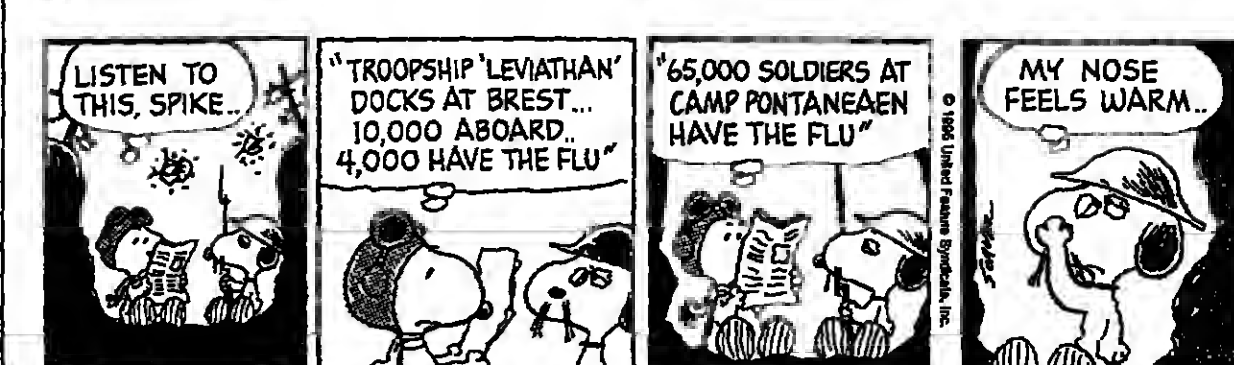
- ACROSS
1 Ecstatic
5 Greatest amount
9 Egged
14 Wide-mouthed jar
15 Sheltered
16 Singer Judd
17 Astirgent
18 Window part
19 Defeat decisively
20 Clerical item
23 "My Gal"
24 Hi-fi
25 Climb
27 List ender
30 Kitchen gadget
33 Indistinct
37 Burn the surface of
39 TV part
40 Large landmass
41 Type of letter or saw
42 School letters
43 Rendezvous
44 Throng
45 Inquired
46 Convince
48 — do well
50 "Le Nozze di Figaro"
52 Radiation devices
57 Summer need
59 Necktie feature, sometimes
62 Mountain crest
64 Singing pair
65 Lazily
66 Tolerated
67 Fleuret
68 Soothe
69 Pavilions
70 Transmit
71 — majesty



- DOWN
1 Laughs heartily
2 Parcel out
3 Feather
4 Daughter of David
5 Team charm?
6 Hedgepodge
7 Vend
8 Relates
9 Open a gift
10 College cheer
11 Part of a certain lamp
12 Lazarus or Bovy
13 Government representative: abbr.
21 Lack
22 Baby oak
26 "— have peace" (Ulysses S. Grant)
28 Tennis great
29 Find out
31 Fashion magazine
32 Enjoy a novel
33 "I Remember"
34 Applies
35 Gets soured
36 Consume
38 General's gofer
41 Darling: Fr.
45 Sandarac tree
47 Marries again
49 Overacted
51 Mountain range or South
53 Know-how
54 Cloth
55 Croissants
56 Class
57 Eat nothing
58 Comedian Johnson
60 Easily deceived one
61 Noticed
63 Youngster



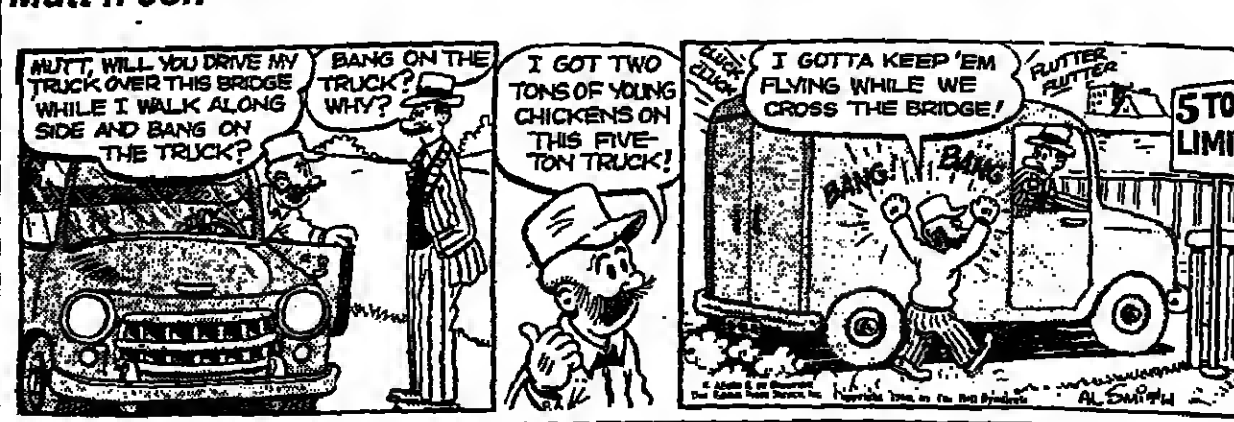
Peanuts



Andy Capp



Mutt'n' Jeff



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Davenport stuns Graf; Huber reaches Acura final

MANHATTAN BEACH, California (AP) — Lindsay Davenport, playing the best tennis of her career this summer, made Steffi Graf her latest high-name victim.

Davenport surprised the world's co-No. 1 player 6-3, 6-3 in the Acura Classic semifinals Saturday, handing Graf her first loss in the United States since November 1994.

Anke Huber, a 22-year-old tabbed as the German successor to Graf, held off No. 7 Karina Haboudova of Slovakia 7-6 (7-3), 6-3 in the other semifinal. Huber, the second seed, has beaten Davenport once in six career meetings.

"I don't know if it's sunk in yet. It means so much to me that I was able to really pull it out," Davenport said of her first victory over Graf in five career meetings.

"She is the greatest player probably that's ever lived and I'll always have this no matter what happens."

Davenport also has the title of Olympic champion. Two weeks ago, she strung together victories over Huber, Iva Majoli, Mary Joe Fernandez and Arantxa Sanchez Vicario in Atlanta to win the gold medal.

"The Olympics gave me a lot of confidence that I could break through and win a match against one of the top players when I beat Arantxa," she said.

Davenport, ranked 10th in the world, lost a three-setter

to Graf at Indian Wells, California, in February and had match point against co-No. 1 Monica Seles earlier this year.

"It's very nice to finally get one under my belt," she said.

Huber led 5-1 before Haboudova won five straight games to tie the first set. Huber tossed her racket on the ground in disgust, and Haboudova went on to take a 6-5 lead. Huber held serve to force the tiebreaker, which she dominated 7-3.

Huber broke serve in the sixth and eighth games for a 5-3 lead in the second set. Haboudova netted a backhand service return on match point to send Huber into her third final on the WTA Tour this year.

Graf hardly resembled a pro who is in her record 345th week as the world's top-ranked women's player.

Her vaunted forehand consistently missed the mark, either heading straight into the net or landing well beyond the baseline. She appeared angry at herself, an emotion Graf rarely displays on court.

"I couldn't really get myself up to fight for every point because I just kept missing them early," she said. "I tried but it felt like I had no timing."

Graf lost for just the 44th time in 10 years. Her last previous straight-set defeat was 6-4, 6-4 to Mary Pierce in the Virginia Slims Cham-

pionships in November 1994.

She hadn't dropped a set in three prior matches this week, her first appearance at Manhattan Beach since winning here in 1987. That victory propelled Graf into the No. 1 spot for the first time.

"I didn't have a lot of confidence in my shots and that's why I'm frustrated," she said.

Graf brushed off a question about the condition of her back, claiming the chronic pain due to a bone spur didn't bother her. She was playing her first tournament since winning a seventh Wimbledon title in July.

Yet it was obvious Graf wasn't getting to balls she usually puts away.

"All week long, I haven't been able to do what I'm used to," she said. "I have not a really good feel for my forehand. I'm playing it more safe than going for it."

Davenport noticed Graf's lack of mobility, and promptly took advantage. The 6-foot-2 (1.57 metre), 165-pounder (75 kilograms) from nearby Newport Beach smashed shots deep past the service line and fearlessly attacked Graf's forehand on the fast court.

"A lot of times she got them late and mistimed a lot of forehands, which was a huge advantage," Davenport said. "When that forehand's on, she's pretty

unbeatable."

Davenport, who once had one of the tour's weaker serves, aces Graf to put away the first set, 6-3, after earning service breaks in the fourth and sixth games.

Davenport broke Graf's service to open the second set, then served out the second game at 40-love to take a 2-0 lead. It was one of four service games Davenport won without loss of a point.

Graf battled to hold serve in the fifth game, surviving two deuces to trail 3-2. But Davenport's strategy of attacking the net paid off with a backhand volley winner that gave her a 4-2 advantage.

The German held once more at 4-3. Then Davenport won seven of the last eight points to claim victory.

Graf double-faulted to set up match point. On the final point, Davenport's shot ticked the net and rattled Graf, who sent a forehand wide into the corner.

Davenport, seemingly startled, looked up at her mother, sister, brother-in-law and coach in the stands.

"When it happened, I didn't quite think it happened. I was like, 'oh my God, the ball went out,'" she said. "I was kind of in shock there for a couple moments."

Sampras, Ivanisevic reach Indianapolis final

INDIANAPOLIS (R) — Top-seeded Pete Sampras and second seed Goran Ivanisevic of Croatia both displayed airtight games in Saturday's semifinals to set up a sizzling showdown in the final of the \$1 million RCA Championships.

World number one Sampras reached his first final since winning the Japan open in April with a routine 6-1 6-4 victory over 13th-seeded Bohdan Ulihrach of the Czech Republic.

Playing in his second successive Indy semifinal, the seventh-ranked Ivanisevic played flawless tennis to rounce fifth-seeded and 15th-ranked Todd Martin 6-2 6-4.

Both Sampras and Ivanisevic started the year strong, but slowed down considerably as the season advanced.

Sampras won all four tournament finals he has contested this year, but the last one was five months ago. Since May, he has been grappling with the death of his coach, Tim Gullikson, from brain cancer.

"I haven't played a lot of tennis over the past couple of months and I feel like my form has gotten better each time I've played," Sampras said.

"I am in a good groove, serving pretty well and things are looking very good. I needed some matches going into the U.S. Open in a week's time, so it will be nice to win here and go in there with a lot of confidence."

Ivanisevic won four titles at the beginning of the year and was in three other finals, but the season started to change for the Croatian when he was forced to retire from

the Lipton Championships final in March with a stiff neck.

Sampras holds a narrow 7-6 career edge over Ivanisevic, who won their last encounter in the semifinals at Lipton.

"There's not a whole lot of strategy when you play Goran," Sampras said. "You just try and get his serve back. It's the best serve I've ever played against."

Ulihrach, the only player to enter the semifinals without dropping a set, is known as a clay court specialist and was making his first semifinal appearance in a hard-court event and his first semifinal showing in the United States.

Sampras had lost to Ulihrach in their only previous match played at this year's ATP Tour World Team Cup in May — Sampras's first clay court match of the season.

But the Czech failed to deliver in the end, yielding a pair of service breaks in each set and falling victim to Sampras's powerful serve at the other end.

Ivanisevic, who has served 63 aces this week and 998 this year, had 11 aces against Martin. He won 23 of 24 points on the first serves he successfully got in.

"As soon as I started to serve good in the beginning of the match, I knew it was going to be a good match for me," Ivanisevic said. "I was very confident."

O'Brien takes another giant step to advance to New Haven final

NEW HAVEN, Connecticut (R) — Alex O'Brien, a wild card entry who started the year with a distant 210 ranking, gained the final of the Pilot Pen International Tennis Tournament Saturday night.

O'Brien made the championship round for the first time in his six-year pro career with a tense 7-6 (7-4) 6-7 (7-4) 6-4 victory over 14th-seeded Mark Philippoussis of Australia.

The 26-year-old Texan will face 10th-seeded Jan Siemerink of the Netherlands in Sunday's battle for the \$150,000 first prize. Siemerink advanced with a 6-3 3-6 6-3 decision over fourth seed Wayne Ferreira of South Africa.

"It was a long, hard battle but I came through in a lot of clutch situations and I'm really happy about that," said O'Brien, who beat Philippoussis in straight sets in Cincinnati a week ago.

O'Brien, a national collegiate champion while at Stanford, won it by breaking Philippoussis's cannon service in the first game of the third set. At 30-40, Philippoussis lobbed past the baseline and that was the only opening the American needed. It also marked the only service break of the match.

The players battled through the first two sets, which took nearly two hours to play.

In the first, the fearless O'Brien overcame double break point situations in the fourth and 10th games. Finally, in

the tiebreaker, O'Brien's backhand placement gave him a mini-break at 3-2 and he was able to run out the set by winning his remaining service points.

In the second set, Philippoussis nailed a forehand crosscourt for a 5-3 opening in the second tiebreaker, then used his serve to close it out and even the match.

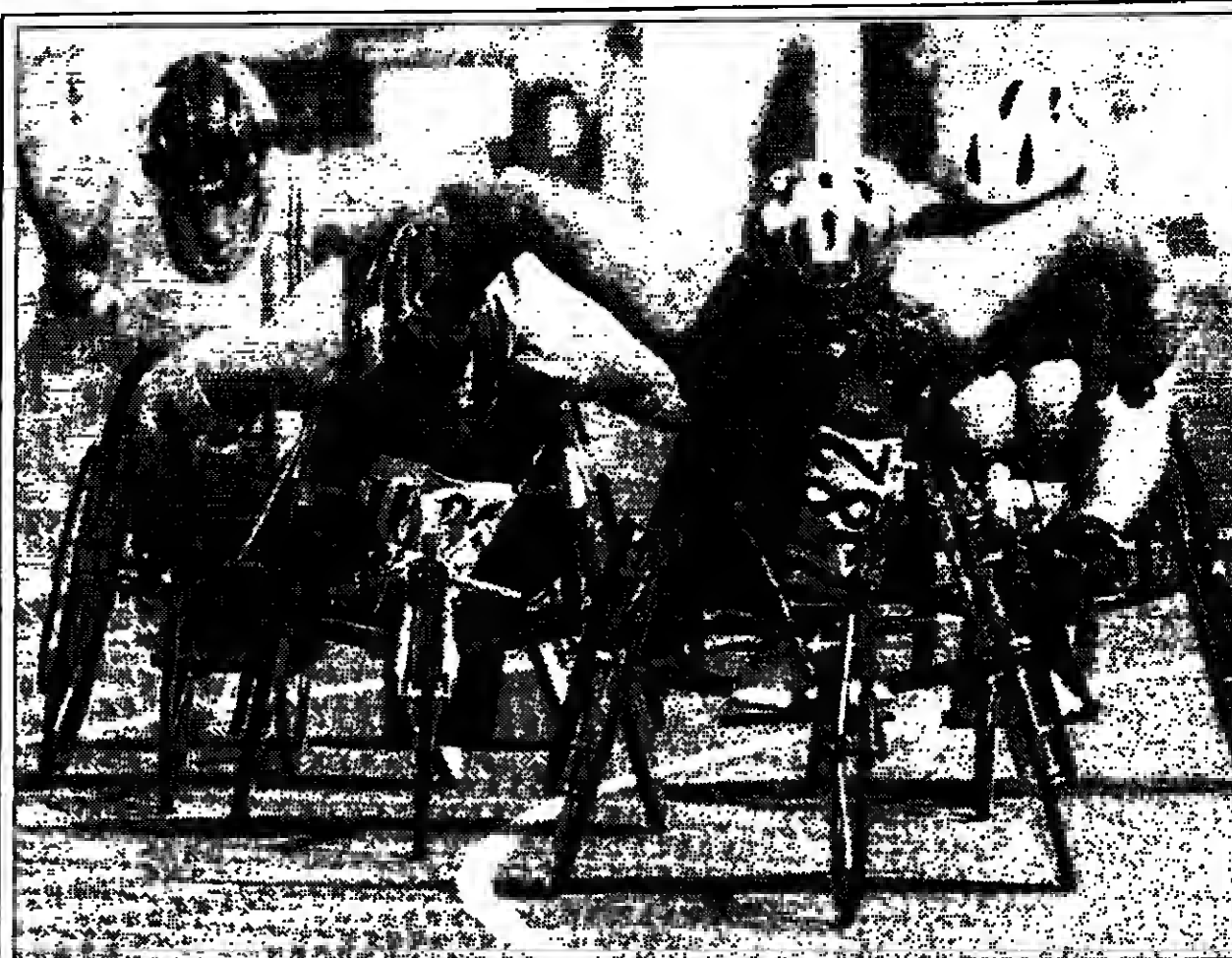
Philippoussis had made the semifinals by beating third-seeded Jim Courier and sixth-seeded Marc Rosset. O'Brien advanced with a straight-set quarterfinal upset of top-seeded French Open champion Yevgeny Kafelnikov.

"I just believe I can win now," said O'Brien. "I'm playing some quality tennis."

The 26-year-old Siemerink, looking for his second singles title of the year, overcame five break points at 3-3 in the third set before charging through to victory.

Ferreira, ranked 10th in the world, had the Dutchman in a 0-40 hole in the crucial seventh game of the final set. The Dutchman fought back to deuce, but Ferreira held two more break points before yielding.

"I had my chances but he came up with some big shots and he also got very lucky at times," said Ferreira.



SCENES FROM THE PARALYMPIC GAMES

Heinz Frei of Switzerland (above) moves ahead of his competitors in the 800 metre mens T52 semifinal heat Saturday during the 10th Paralympic Games in Atlanta. Frei, who holds the world record in the 800m, finished the heat with the fastest time, 1:43.54. (Left): Bin Hou of the People's Republic of China leaps to clear the high jump bar at a world record 1.92 metres to earn the gold medal Saturday in Atlanta (Reuter photo)

Egypt guards disabled athletes to prevent defections

CAIRO, (AFP) — Egypt has clamped strict security measures on its disabled athletes at the Paralympic Games in Atlanta after the disappearance of two of its athletes during the Olympics, a newspaper reported Sunday.

The government daily Al Gomhuriya said the Egyptian team "has taken draconian security measures to prevent

the disabled athletes from defecting," without giving further details.

Two Egyptians — wrestler Mustapha Abdul Hareth and handball player Ahmad Al Awadi — opted to stay on in the United States during the Olympic Games in Atlanta last month.

According to Al Akhbar newspaper, Abdul Hareth has joined a club in New

York and is earning \$5,000 a month, while Awadi has had less luck and is working as a waiter in an Italian restaurant in North Carolina.

Egypt, which won no medals at the Olympics, is hopeful of at least three golds from its disabled team during the Aug. 16-25 Paralympics.

Foschi wins national 5-km open water race

FORT LAUDERDALE, Florida (R) — Schoolgirl Jessica Foschi, after a year of legal battles, won her first battle in the water at the U.S. Swimming National 5-kilometer Open Water Championship Saturday off Fort Lauderdale beach.

Foschi, 15, of Old Brookville, New York, banned internationally for two years after testing positive for steroids last August at the National Championships, topped a strong women's field to win in one hour 14:33 minutes, in only her second open water swim.

The Atlantic Ocean course provided rough

water for the 3.1-mile test.

Danny Chocron, 22, of Caracas, Venezuela, the 10-km national runner-up, won the men's title in 1:10:06.

For Foschi, the victory seemed a vindication after a disappointing week at the nationals. Her best finish was sixth in Monday's 800 freestyle. She was ninth in the 1,500 free.

"I really was not happy at all with the way I swam at nationals," said Foschi. "I knew this would be more fun because there's less pressure. I'm really glad to leave with at least one

good swim."

FINA, the sport's international governing body, banned her from all international meets for two years after a hearing in Lausanne despite the American Arbitration Association's absolving her of any sanctions in the United States.

Foschi, who has denied any wrongdoing, is not allowed to swim in the April 1997 FINA Short Course World Championships in Goteburg, in World Cup meets or any other meet held outside the United States.

Foschi finished fourth in the 800 freestyle at the Olympic trials in 8:41.61,

ending her hopes of making the team.

"I think some things went wrong with my training, but that's not the only thing it was," Foschi said. "I think I'm feeling a lot of the effects of what I went through last winter."

Following her lengthy and expensive legal battles with U.S. swimming and FINA, Foschi has one final appeal with the International Olympic Committee's Court of Sport Arbitration panel in Lausanne at a date still to be determined.

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ملاحضة الأصل

Criville wins photo-finish Czech Motorcycle Grand Prix

BRNO, Czech Republic (AFP) — Spaniard Alex Criville won the Czech 500cc motorcycle Grand Prix here Sunday in a photo-finish, pushing his Honda 2/1000ths of second in front of teammate and two-time world champion Michael Doohan of Australia.

The Spaniard stole the laurels in the final metres of the 22-lap race, having gone into the final corner trailing Doohan.

"I wasn't sure I was the winner," said Criville with a broad smile afterwards.

For Doohan, who also came second in Austria, it is the second time in two weeks that he has been robbed of victory in the last lap by his teammate and the upset showed on his face.

"I guess we have to believe the lap times, they've

got the final say," he said, with the photo-finish defeat still sinking in.

"It would be nice to get out in front instead of this jostling stuck behind and jostling for position," he added.

For the two riders' team, the one-two finish here secures Honda the 1996 manufacturers' title.

And although Doohan still holds a commanding 52 point lead in the Riders' Championship with only five events to go in the 16-race season, Criville has let the Australian know that he will be pushing right to the end.

Criville's performance was all the more impressive considering he had to fight his way back up the field after a poor start.

The 1993 superbike world champion Sean Rus-

sell jumped to the lead on the second corner after charging his Suzuki through the ranks from the third row of the grid.

But Doohan then took the lead on the seventh lap and it was soon a two-bike battle between the Australian and Criville.

While both the Honda riders started the race on soft rear tyres to compensate for the lack of grip on the newly resurfaced track, Criville's hard front tyre — against Doohan's soft slick up front — appeared to help him pull later into the corners to gain the edge on the exit.

Among the race's casualties was Japan's Norifumi Abe, who was unable to hold his line on the first lap and went riding into the gravel. Although he regained the track, the Ya-

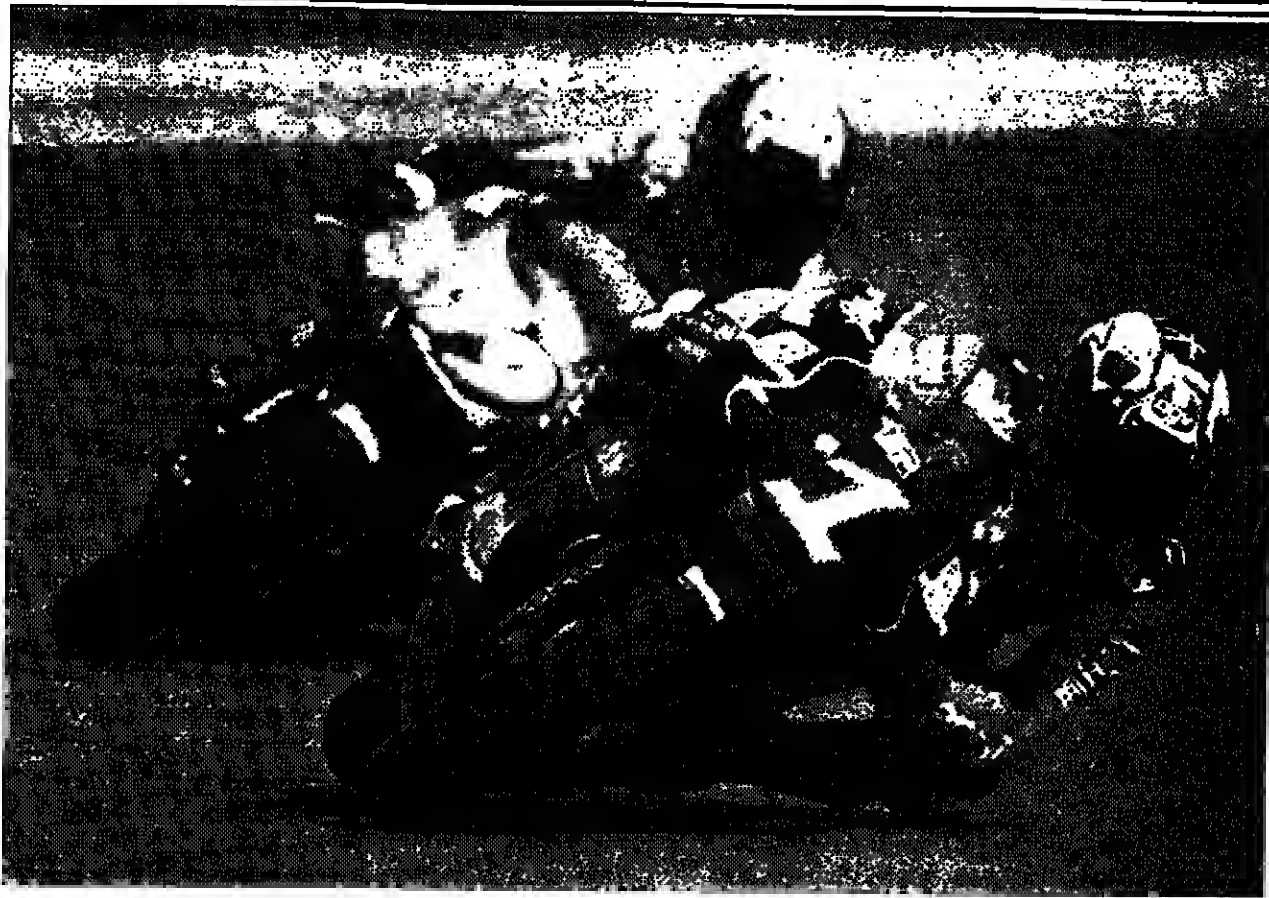
maha rider faced an uphill battle to work his way back from last.

Last year's winner, Italian Luca Cadalora retired his Honda to the pits on the third lap.

In the 250cc class, the "Roman emperor" Max Biaggi scored his third win in the Czech Grand Prix, pushing him to a 37 point lead in the overall Rider's Championship.

The Italian, who has dominated the class on an Aprilia, could now secure his third championship title at the Imola Grand Prix on home-soil in two-weeks time.

His compatriot, the new teenage sensation Valentino Rossi won his first ever championship race at 17-years old in the 125cc class on an Aprilia.



Max Biaggi (1) of Italy rides his Aprilia to victory of the 250cc motorcycle Czech Grand Prix in Brno Sunday. Biaggi rides in front of Olivier Jacque (19) of France who took the second place (Reuter photo)

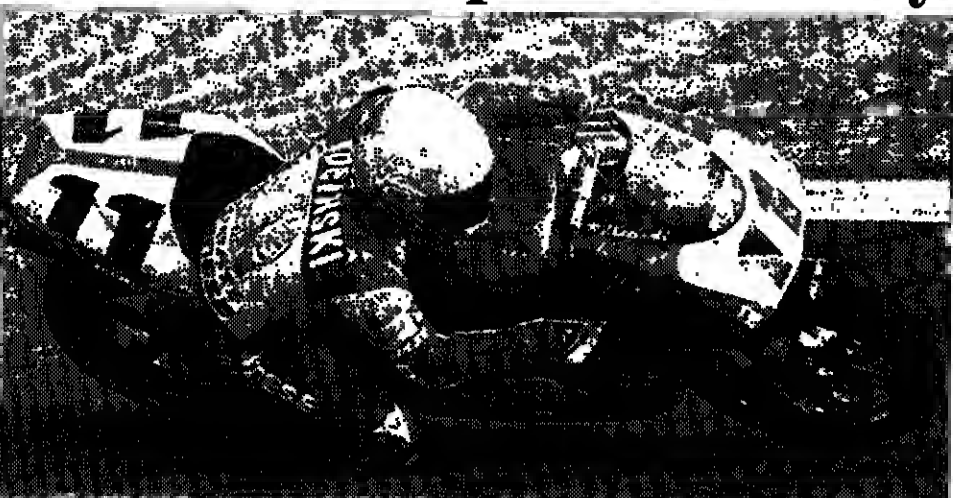
Kocinski takes double superbike victory

SENTUL, Indonesia (R) — American John Kocinski won both world superbike races at Indonesia's Sentul Track Sunday to move from fourth to third in the championship table.

The 28-year-old broke early in both races and easily contained the opposition to take the chequered flag on his Ducati in 37 minutes 18.525 seconds in the first race and 37:10.159 in the second.

New Zealand's Aaron Slight on a Honda finished third in the first race and second in the second to leapfrog over Australian Troy Corser to the top of the championship standings after eight rounds. Slight clocked 37:25.827 and then 37:14.854 seconds.

World champion Carl Fogarty, who switched from Ducati to Honda this year, finished second and then third despite taking pole position during qualifying Saturday.



American John Kocinski moves his way around Indonesia's Sentul track Sunday during the world superbike races. Kocinski won both heats of the world championship round to move from fourth to third in the championship table. He won in a time of 37 minutes 18.525 seconds in the first race and 37:10.159 in the second (Reuter photo)

"There was a problem on a couple of occasions," said the double world champion New Zealander, who is now fourth in the championship. "The throttle kept sticking wide open and believe me, it's no joke when that happens."

Corser, riding a Ducati, finished a disappointing sixth and fifth to slip to second overall after overshooting a bend and falling in the second race while trying to overtake Kocinski.

The Australian resumed the race unhurt and Kocins-

ki was quick to deny responsibility.

"We got close but there was nothing intentional. I never touched him," he said.

The ninth round takes place in Sugo, Japan, on Aug. 25.

Ravanelli upstages Shearer in English league debut

LONDON (R) — Fabrizio Ravanelli spoiled the party for Alan Shearer Saturday.

While the world's costliest footballer was getting little change out of an Everton defence, Ravanelli was making merry on his Premier League debut for Middlesbrough with a hat-trick against Liverpool.

It was a stunning performance by the Italian, one of a batch of foreigners who are playing their skills in the English game this season.

But the player who cost £7 million (\$10.8 million) from Juventus — less than half the sum Newcastle parted with for Shearer — was philosophical about his instant stardom at Middlesbrough.

"I am a professional and the goals will come," he said. "I never put a target on the number 1 will score."

"The other players in the team are more important to me than goals."

"It was a very interesting day but it would have been much better if we had won."

It took a late strike from Ravanelli to earn Middlesbrough a 3-3 draw with a Liverpool side intent on ending a six-year spell without a league title.

Manager Bryan Robson was highly impressed with his new charge but warned: "Don't expect him to produce

every week."

Leading British bookmakers were similarly impressed, slashing Ravanelli's odds to 10-1 from 33-1 to finish as the Premier League's leading scorer.

Shearer still commands the shortest odds despite his less than auspicious start for Newcastle.

And he has the strength of character to handle the pressure of expectation from a £15 million (\$23.2 million) price tag.

The pressure was on Shearer when he went into the European Championship finals earlier this year with a dismal return of goals for England.

He responded by scoring five times.

Newcastle manager Kevin Keegan was quick to absolve his world record signing of any blame after the 2-0 defeat by Everton.

"I was looking for other players to give him support but there was precious little of that," said Keegan.

"We'll be able to judge him when he gets a better service."

Shearer did manage to breach the Everton defence with a header in the first half but the "goal" was ruled out for a push by Philippe Albert.

CORRECTION

In the advertisement that we ran in Saturday's (17/8/1996) paper about the investment offer by a German group to finance a cigarettes factory we printed the investment amount as 110,000,00 DM while the accurate figure is 110,000,000 DM. We regret the error.

Zanardi wins pole for Indycar race

ELKHART LAKE, Wisconsin (R) — Italian rookie Alex Zanardi will look to win his second race in a row from the pole as he captured the prime position for Sunday's Indycar Texaco/Havoline 200 at Road America Saturday.

Zanardi turned in a lap at 141.179 miles per hour (227.20 kph) to earn his fourth pole of the season, tying him with Chip Ganassi racing teammate Jimmy Vasser for the most poles collected in the series.

Zanardi will have Brazilian Gil De Ferran starting next to him on the front

row. De Ferran also drives a Honda-powered racer.

The Newman/Haas race team captured the second row with Michael Andretti getting the inside position and Brazilian Christian Fittipaldi on the outside.

Mauricio Gugelmin of Brazil will start on the inside of the third row with Bryan Herta.

Herta led all drivers during Friday's provisional session, and is coming off a strong fourth place performance at mid-Ohio last week.

McCoist hits hat-trick in Rangers romp

GLASGOW (R) — Rangers' veteran striker Ally McCoist took his tally of goals to five in four games this season with a second half hat-trick in the 5-2 Scottish Premier Division win over Dunfermline Saturday.

Rangers, who carry a 3-1 lead into the second leg of their European Cup qualifying round second leg away to Russian side Alania Vladikavkas Wednesday, carried just too much firepower for promoted Dunfermline.

McCoist's goals came in the 46th, a penalty, 73rd and 85th minutes.

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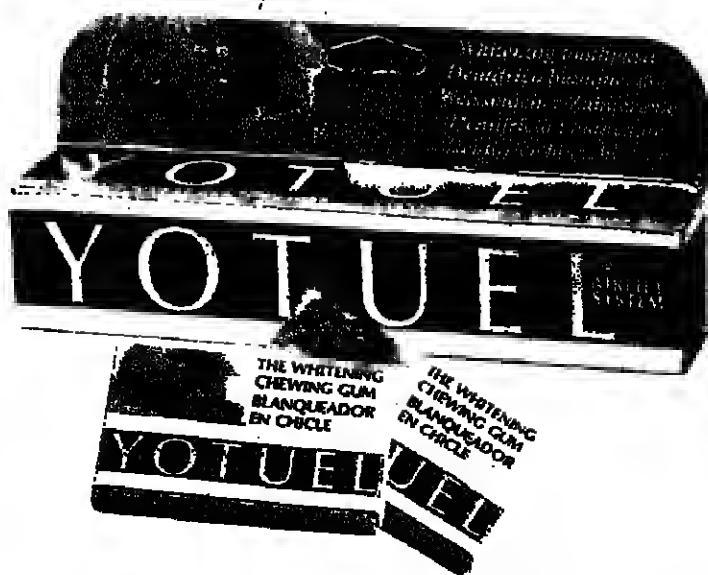
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Netanyahu's policy raises chances of war with Syria — analyst

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (R) — Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's opposition to relinquishing the Golan Heights has raised the chances of war with Syria considerably, the head of Israel's top strategic think-tank says.

In an article in the Haaretz newspaper on Sunday, Zeev Mazur, head of the Jaffee Centre for Strategic Studies, said Israel's Syrian policy had taken a 180-degree turn since Mr. Netanyahu defeated Labour's Shimon Peres in last May's election.

"The main meaning of this diplomatic about-face on the Syrian track is a considerable increase in the probability of war with Syria and perhaps against additional Arab elements," Mr. Maoz wrote.

"Therefore, as long as the Netanyahu government intends to continue its present policy, it must prepare the Israeli army and Israeli citizens for war in the not too distant future," he said.

The government has approved the construction of 300 new housing units on the Golan Heights, a spokesman said Sunday.

A spokesman for the housing ministry said 300 apartments would be built at Katzrin, the main Israeli settlement on the strategic plateau which the Jewish state seized from Syria in the 1967 Mideast war and annexed in 1981.

"The decision to go ahead with the project has been approved by Deputy Housing Minister Meir Parush," said ministry spokesman Amit Dobkin.

Mr. Dobkin said the decision did not represent a shift in policy by the right-wing government but was in line with the former Labour government's plans for the Golan Heights.

"The previous government authorised construction of more than 2,000

apartments in the Golan and we are continuing the development of this region," he said.

The official said that the previous government's stated position in favour of returning the Golan to Syria in exchange for a full peace treaty with Damascus had discouraged Israelis from investing or settling in the region and that as a result there were many empty apartments.

"Before building more housing units, the empty apartments will be attributed, which should increase the Golan's population from 15,000 today to 17,000 or 18,000 within a year," he said.

Last week the Israeli newspaper Yediot Aharonot reported that about 100 families had already discreetly moved into some of the empty apartments over the past three months.

It remains uncertain how the government plans to finance new housing construction on the Golan Heights.

Regional officials have demanded the government fully finance all construction, as promised during Israel's recent election campaign by the Third Way Party which is now part of the governing coalition.

The party, a breakaway Labour faction opposed to any return of the Golan Heights to Syria, won four seats in parliament and its leader, Avigdor Kahalani, is internal security minister in the Netanyahu cabinet.

Before coming to office, Mr. Netanyahu ruled out any return of the Golan to Syria, although he has recently indicated some flexibility on the issue, insisting that he wishes to resume peace talks with Syria "on all outstanding issues" and without preconditions.

Syria insists on a return of the entire plateau as its bot-

tom-line condition for a peace agreement with Israel.

Mr. Netanyahu has said Israel must maintain sovereignty over the Golan Heights.

Mr. Peres, who favoured trading occupied land for peace, gave no commitment to quit the Golan but said he could not imagine Syria making peace without getting back the plateau.

Despite a military balance in Israel's favour, Syria might risk war as the only option to end the diplomatic deadlock over the Golan and try to strike a psychological blow by firing missiles at Israeli cities, Mr. Maoz wrote in Haaretz.

"As long as the freeze in (peace) negotiations continues, Syria's motivation to initiate war to break the ice will grow," he said.

Mr. Maoz acknowledged that many Israeli experts, citing Syria's lack of a superpower sponsor or a qualitative military edge over Israel, believed war soon was unlikely.

Moreover, he said, Syria realised that while it could control the size of its own attack it could not predict the scale of an Israeli reaction, which could lead to massive casualties.

But Mr. Maoz wrote Syria might deem such a risk acceptable "if it feels that its back is to the wall or time is working against it."

He also criticised Mr. Netanyahu's offer to resume negotiations based on a "Lebanon first" plan that both Syria and Lebanon have rejected.

Under the plan, Israeli troops would pull out of a zone they occupy in South Lebanon in exchange for a Syrian commitment to disarm Hizbollah guerrillas fighting Israel there.

Mr. Maoz called the plan "empty" and said it was a stalling tactic by Mr. Netanyahu.

Chief justices of Court of Cassation and Higher Court take oath of office

AMMAN (Petra) — A Royal Decree was issued Sunday endorsing the appointment of Naji Tarawneh and Omar Abaza as chief justices of the Court of Cassation and Higher Court of Justice respectively. The decree also endorsed the appointment of Zuheir Al Kayed as president of the general prosecutors' office. Mr. Tarawneh and Mr. Abaza took the oath of office before His

Majesty King Hussein. The ceremony, which was held at the Royal Court, was attended by Royal Court Chief Awn Khasawneh and Justice Minister Abdul Karim Al Dughmi.

Mr. Abaza replaced Khleif Suheimat, who is currently serving as principal of both the Court of Cassation and Higher Court of Justice. Judge Suheimat has requested to be retired.



Israeli ministers disagree over Hebron

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Disagreements arose among senior Israeli ministers Sunday over how to proceed with Israel's promised partial withdrawal from Hebron, lessening chances the long-delayed pullback could take place soon, Israel public radio reported.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu had gathered his senior ministers for the second time since Thursday to review a proposal put forward by Defence Minister Yitzhak Mordechai for handing most of the West Bank city over to the Palestinian autonomy government of Yasser Arafat, officials in the prime minister's office said.

But the radio said some ministers objected to Mr. Mordechai's plans and that the group will meet again later Sunday and could pursue talks throughout the week on the redeployment, which is already six months behind the schedule laid out in the Oslo peace accords.

Transportation Minister Yitzhak Levy, from the far-right National Religious Party, complained that the proposals did not provide for significantly expanding

a Jewish settlement where 400 militant nationalists now live among Hebron's 120,000 Palestinian residents, the radio said.

The radio did not say which other officials raised objections to Mr. Mordechai's plan. Also attending the meeting were National Infrastructure Minister Ariel Sharon and Deputy Prime Minister Rafael Eitan, both headline proponents of Jewish settlement in the Palestinian territories.

Under the terms of the 1995 Oslo peace accord extending Palestinian autonomy on the West Bank, Israel was to have withdrawn its army from 80 per cent of Hebron in March, leaving behind a small force to guard Jewish settlers and Jewish religious sites in the heart of the city.

The redeployment from Hebron, the last main West Bank town still under Israeli control and a focal point of Arab-Israeli violence, was postponed by the previous Labour government following a spate of suicide bombings by Palestinians in late February and early March.

Mr. Netanyahu said last week he would press ahead

with a pullback from Hebron, but only after ensuring that its terms would ensure the security of Jewish residents and pilgrims in the city, which is holy to both Muslims and Jews.

Mr. Mordechai said last week that once the Netanyahu government approved a final plan for Hebron, he would present the project to Mr. Arafat. No date for that meeting has been set, although some officials said it could take place later this week.

Mr. Sharon, an outspoken defender of Jewish settlers in the Palestinian territories, visited Jewish residents in Hebron early Sunday prior to the ministerial talks. Israel radio reported without elaborating.

Israeli media, quoting senior officials, have reported that Mr. Mordechai's plan would preserve the army's right to patrol in areas turned over to the Palestinian National Authority (PNA), a change to the autonomy accord which Palestinian officials have insisted would be unacceptable.

The plan would also boost the number of troops pre-

sent in Jewish areas in the city, link downtown Jewish homes to the large settlement of Kiryat Arba just north of Hebron and spread the redeployment not over a longer period than previously foreseen.

'Israel will be main loser'

Israel stands to be the main loser in the stalemate peace process, brought about by its own right-wing government, a senior Egyptian official said Sunday.

Osama Al Baz, political advisor to president Hosni Mubarak, said Mr. Netanyahu risked "setting back the peace process which will endanger Israel." "Israel will suffer much more than other countries in such a situation because some parties may react," Mr. Baz said, referring to possible anti-Israeli attacks by militants.

Mr. Baz, speaking on Egyptian Television, said he did not want to issue a "warning" to Israel but simply a "reminder."

He said it was still possible to modify Israel's positions through negotiations and dialogue.

Netanyahu and Levy patch up differences

TEL AVIV (Agencies) — Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Foreign Minister David Levy ended two weeks of public feuding Sunday with an agreement on sharing responsibility for managing the peace process, Mr. Levy said.

"We have agreed on a coordination between the foreign ministry and the prime minister's office," Mr. Levy said following his first meeting with Mr. Netanyahu since the start of the month.

Mr. Levy, who had been bristling for weeks over the exclusion of his ministry from key policy initiatives concerning the peace process, said that "if this had not been resolved today, I would have resigned."

"I could no longer accept that the foreign ministry be completely paralysed," he said in an interview on Israeli radio.

Since coming to office June 18, Mr. Netanyahu has virtually monopolised foreign policy, visiting the United States, Egypt and Jordan without taking any foreign ministry officials along and dealing with the Palestinians primarily through close advisors.

According to Israeli public radio, the Netanyahu-Levy reconciliation pact centred on the creation of a foreign-policy coordinating committee grouping the two men and Defence Minister Yitzhak Mordechai, the radio said.

The committee would focus firstly on policy related to the peace process with the Palestinians, Syria and Lebanon, the radio said.

Mr. Netanyahu also agreed to a framework for cooperation between his office and the foreign ministry, acknowledging Mr. Levy's "special role" in formulating foreign policy, the radio said.

Finally the two men also agreed to name a former

army chief of staff, Dan Shomron, to head the committee overseeing negotiations with the Palestinian National Authority (PNA).

A move by Mr. Netanyahu earlier this month to name his chief cabinet secretary, Danny Naveh, to head the Palestinian negotiations steering committee was the spark which ignited the feud with Mr. Levy, aides to the foreign minister said.

Mr. Levy, the only member of the Netanyahu government who has met with Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat, wanted control over the committee, they said.

The steering committee is tasked with overseeing political negotiations with the PNA led by Mr. Arafat, and notably the resumption of talks on a permanent settlement for the Palestinian territories.

Prior to Sunday's meeting Mr. Levy had stayed away from the past two weekly cabinet meetings and spent most of last week on a previously unannounced private visit to the United States.

Mr. Levy is a long-time political rival who unsuccessfully battled Mr. Netanyahu for leadership of the right-wing Likud party then broke away last year to form his own party.

Relations were hitler the last time Mr. Levy was foreign minister in the Likud-led government in 1990-92 and Mr. Netanyahu was his deputy.

Mr. Levy's aides have complained that since his election in May, Mr. Netanyahu has denied the foreign ministry a role in peace moves with Israel's Arab neighbours. Mr. Netanyahu insists it is his job to lead the country.

Mr. Levy stunned Mr. Netanyahu in June and again in July by threatening to quit until room was made in the cabinet for hawkish political ally Ariel Sharon.

China to aid Iraq under oil-for-food deal

BEIJING (R) — China will actively assist Iraq with humanitarian products under the Iraqi oil-for-food deal with the United Nations, an official newspaper said on Sunday.

Shi Weisan, an official of the Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Cooperation, was quoted by the Business Weekly as saying China supports the U.N. deal and wants to offer food and medicine to ease the problems of the Iraqi people.

Iraq, under U.N. sanctions since its 1990 invasion of Kuwait, was formally given permission this month to sell \$2 billion worth of oil every six months to buy food and medicine.

Mr. Shi recently returned from a trip to Iraq accompanied by representatives of six major Chinese companies.

Clerides-Denktaş talks look unlikely

NICOSIA (AFP) — Greek-Cypriot leaders are to examine a U.N. request to resume negotiations with the Turkish-Cypriot authorities, but a flareup of ethnic violence has made the possibility unlikely, officials said Sunday.

The killings of two Greek Cypriots during the past week by Turkish-Cypriot forces have raised tensions on the divided island and diminished already slim hopes of an early resumption of talks suspended since 1994, they said.

In a bid to reduce the tension, U.N. Secretary General Boutros Ghali last week proposed a meeting between Cypriot President Glafios

Israel cautions EU over Orient House

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AP) — Israel's new hardline government has told European Union (EU) ministers not to come to Israel next month because they plan to visit the Orient House, the Palestinians' unofficial headquarters in Jerusalem, Israel Radio reported Sunday.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has demanded that Palestinians shut down the Orient House, which Israel sees as a challenge to its sovereignty over the city.

According to Israel Radio, the government sent a message to the EU's three-member ruling council, made up of foreign ministers Dick Spring of Ireland, Carlos Westendorp of Spain and Susanna Agnelli of Italy, telling them that if they insist on visiting the Orient House, no Israeli official will meet them.

An official in the foreign ministry, speaking on condition of anonymity, confirmed there had been "an exchange of messages" between Israel and the ministers.

"No one threatened them, but there were some messages exchanged in which it was possible to understand that

Israel and the EU could eventually meet outside the region," rather than during a visit to Jerusalem, the official said.

There was no immediate EU response to the report. Mr. Netanyahu has linked the continuation of the peace process to the closing of the Orient House and other Palestinian offices in East Jerusalem. Shortly after coming to power in June, his government asked international dignitaries to refrain from visits to Orient House.

Israel's position is that the Palestinians receiving high-level dignitaries at the Orient House violates the autonomy accords, which restrict activities of the Palestinian self-rule government to the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

"Our position is the status of the Orient House is very well-known to the European Union and we expect it to take it into consideration," foreign ministry spokesman Yigal Palmor said.

EU foreign ministers — unlike those from most other countries — usually stop at the Orient House when visiting Jerusalem.

Clerides and Turkish-Cypriot Leader Rauf Denktaş.

A member of the Cypriot National Council said the island's top political body would discuss the U.N. secretary general's proposal at a meeting here scheduled for Tuesday.

Ahead of the council meeting, however, a number of Greek-Cypriot politicians ruled out the possibility of a Clerides-Denktaş summit in the current climate.

"Such a meeting, following the brutal murders of two unarmed youths, would be unlikely and useless," one of them said.

Turkey's acting Prime

Minister Tansu Ciller has also called in the wake of the worst ethnic violence on the island in 22 years for a resumption of direct talks between Mr. Clerides and Mr. Denktaş.

Previous rounds of negotiations have made little progress, however, in resolving the impasse between the two sides.

Meanwhile, Mr. Clerides was due to hold talks Sunday with Greek Defence Minister Gerassimos Arsenis in the northern Greek city of Salonika to discuss the two countries' joint defence strategies and the current situation in Cyprus.

Strong Christian turnout as Lebanese polls start

BEIRUT (Agencies) — Lebanese voters turned out in force Sunday for the first parliamentary elections in four years, despite Christian opposition calls to boycott the poll in protest at Syria's dominant role in the country.

The outcome of Sunday's vote in the mainly Christian Mount Lebanon area and those in other Lebanese regions over the next four Sundays are not expected to change parliament's pro-Syrian character.

As voting began, rival candidates swapped accusations of bribery, intimidation and gangsterism.

Polling was brisk in some areas of Mount Lebanon, the Christian heartland, as Christian voters ignored calls from hardline anti-government leaders to repeat their massive boycott of the last elections in 1992.

Mount Lebanon, whose 656,000 eligible voters elect 35 deputies to the 128-seat parliament, is the first of five regions to vote in the elections.

The region was expected to provide the hottest contest between supporters and opponents of the pro-Syrian government, which Christian opposition leaders accuse of failing to maintain national sovereignty. Syria has 35,000 troops in Lebanon.

As voting began, opposition supporters and an independent watchdog group reported alleged intimidations and electoral violations, particularly in north Metn district where Interior Minister Michel Al Murr, who is responsible for organising the elections, faced a strong opposition ticket.

North Metn opposition candidates said 40-50 of their polling station delegates were detained by police during the night and were only freed at dawn

after a 5 a.m. (0200 GMT) telephone appeal to Prime Minister Rafik Al Hariri.

"It's a very aggressive campaign, of intimidation. It's a scare campaign," Fadi Tuani, a supporter of opposition candidate Nasib Lahoud, told Reuters in reference to the detentions.

The Lebanese Association for the Democracy of Elections (LADE), a private watchdog group, said police in many voting stations were handing out election papers for pro-government candidates in violation of rules, and officials were telling voters out to use curtains to cast their ballots.

"In some places the voting is going very well, but in some other places there are no rules, no laws and it is a big mess," opposition candidate Michel Samaha, a former information minister, told Reuters.

Two hours after voting began, Mr. Murr accused Mr. Lahoud, a millionaire contractor, of distributing \$120,000 in bribes to a handful of people to secure votes for his list.

Mr. Murr said those who allegedly received the bribes were arrested during the night and would be interrogated on Monday.

"The allegations that I distributed bribes are utter lies from a man who has no credibility and is not fit to run this ministry. He has been using bribery for 40 years," Mr. Lahoud told Reuters.

"Murr is not a minister, he is a gang leader," Mr. Lahoud's ally Samaha said. "We demand that minister Murr resign immediately."

About 656,000 Lebanese were eligible to vote Sunday in Mount Lebanon. The other four regions are North Lebanon, Beirut, South Lebanon and the Bekaa Valley.

COLUMBIA DECISION

British phone companies fight over red box

LONDON (R) — A fight over who has the right to use Britain's famous red telephone boxes reached stalemate when both British Telecommunications Plc (BT) and a rival company had to promise not to install any more. New World Payphones has installed about 100 of the world-famous red kiosks — and painted them in green. But BT has taken the new company to London's High Court to dispute its intention to use the kiosks for its own telephones. BT has won several injunctions against New World using the boxes while the court considers the case. "We believe that the red payphones are very much associated with BT," a BT spokesman said. "They should choose their own design." But on Thursday the court said both companies had to stop installing any of the boxes while judges decide. BT, which inherited the boxes when the government privatised the telephone company, has been replacing some of its new-style clear plastic booths with the old-fashioned models. Richard Thompson, a spokesman for New World, told reporters after the hearing: "This concession to us will guarantee our right to compete once we have established to right to do so at full trial."

Indian teachers to march in the nude for wages

NEW DELHI (AFP) — Hundreds of teachers from Bihar have threatened to stage rallies in the nude next month in front of the Indian parliament to demand wages from the government of the eastern state, officials said Friday. The Telegraph newspaper said a forum of teachers had warned that the protesters would strip in front of President Shankar Dayal Sharma and parliament to demand wages they have not received since 1981 in Bihar. The planned nude march is slated to take place on Sept. 5 in New Delhi, said a spokesman of the Joint Forum of School and College Teachers which has 175,000 members on its rolls in the impoverished state. "Most of the forum members have not received a single day's salary since the day they joined service (15 years ago)," said Jai Narayan Singh, leader of the previously unknown Front for Wageless Teachers of Bihar. The forum leader also said after the nude rally the protesters would squat before India's Human Rights Commission to press for their demands. He said hundreds of teachers in state-run schools and colleges in Bihar were on the verge of starvation and more than a dozen had committed suicide as they had not been paid by the state government.

Historian said to plead guilty to theft

COLUMBUS (R) — A 68-year-old art historian pleaded guilty to smuggling three 14th century illuminated manuscript pages commissioned by Petrarch from the Vatican library and other 14th century manuscripts from Spanish cathedral libraries, a U.S. attorney said on Tuesday. Edmund Sargus, U.S. attorney for Ohio's southern district, told a news release that former Ohio State University Professor Anthony Melikas of Upper Arlington, Ohio, also pleaded guilty to offering for sale archaeological items protected by a federal law. It was not clear when the thefts occurred, but the investigation took 14 months. Mr. Sargus said an Akron, Ohio, art dealer, who reportedly brought the case to authorities' attention, had been helpful in the resolution of the thefts.